

DOEALITO

A TALE
OF



TELEGRAPH HILL

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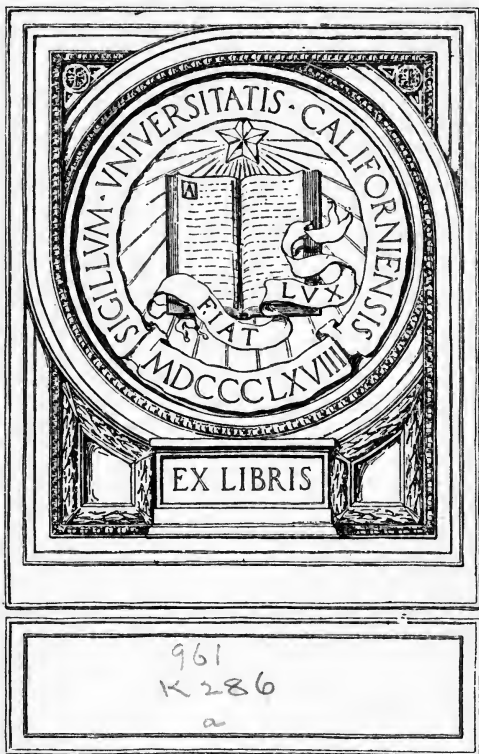
Eugenia Kellogg

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

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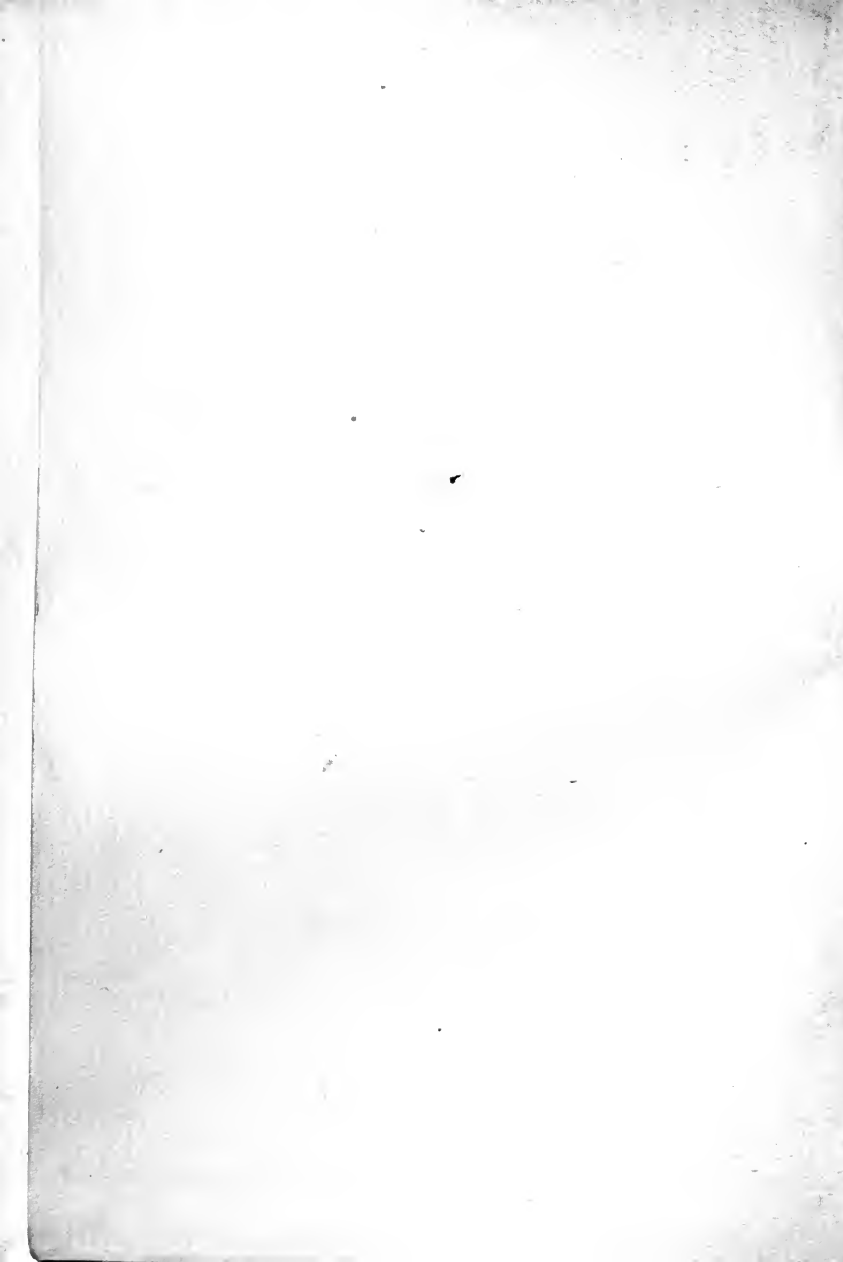


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The Awakening of Pocalito

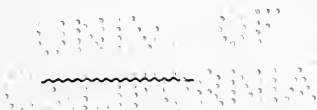
A Tale of Telegraph Hill,

AND

OTHER TALES



EUGENIA KELLOGG—



THE UNKNOWN PUBLISHER

SAN FRANCISCO

1903.

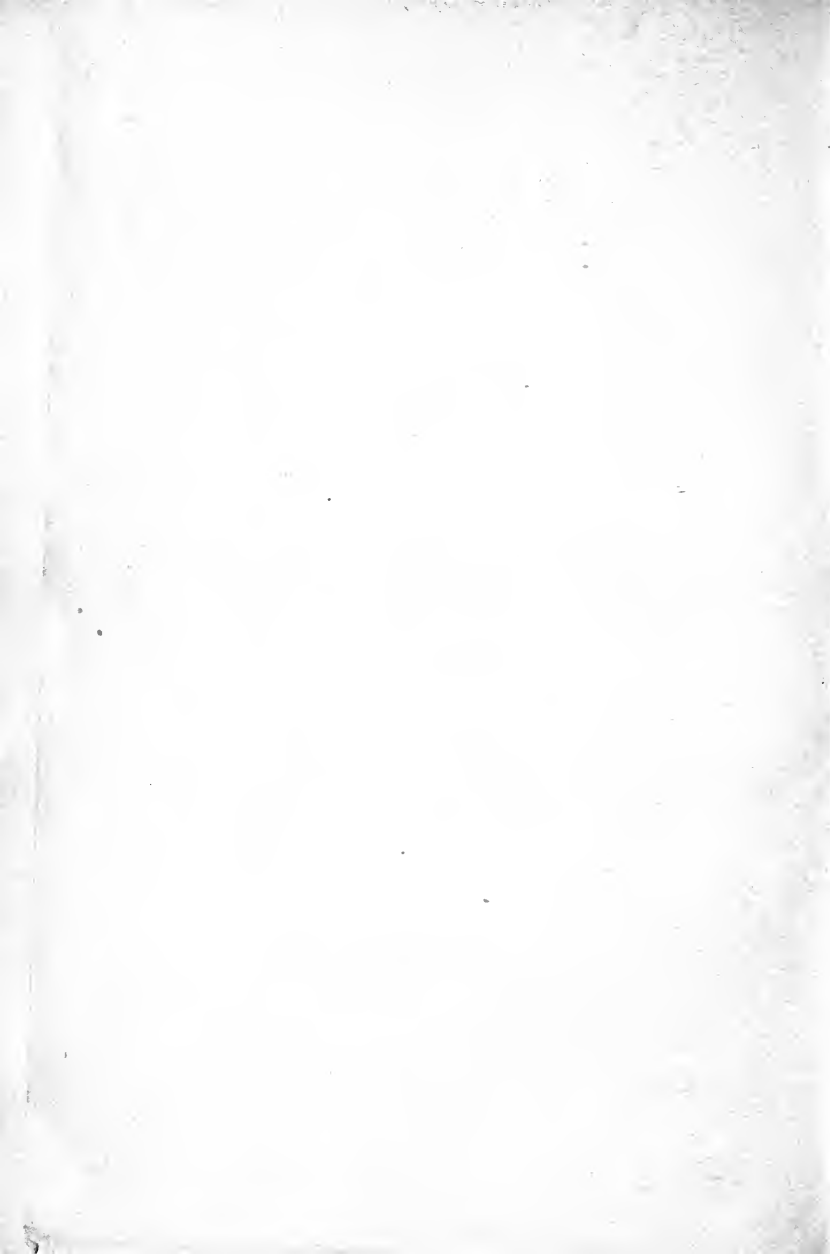
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TO MY MOTHER

Sarah Ann D'Estrange Kellogg

"The depth and dream of my desire,
The bitter paths wherein I stray
Thou knowest ——"



Mrs Eugenie Keessig -
San-Francisco Cal.
My dear Madam.

I have read your stories which I return with hearty indorsement, not only because they are new to a world which has long been sated with golden skies, golden fields, golden sonsets and golden gates, but because they are true.

Here you have the Greek fishermen as I found them forty years ago and as they will be centuries hence. Here are the Italian egg gatherers, as off their own coast. In fact, you have widened the world—our California world—and made the land more entirely Italy than ever before.

If you mean to make a book with these stories, I would suggest that you include your biography of Mayor Sutro. the great, good friend of the poor and especially those you have so faithfully sketched.

Yours
Josephine Miller
Nov 7th 1903 The Heights
Oakland, Cal.

THE AWAKENING OF POCCALITO

THE AWAKENING OF POCCALITO.

A TALE OF TELEGRAPH HILL,
SAN FRANCISCO.

It would, indeed, be unwarrantable presumption to rechristen the seventh in the Giomi household; for if there existed anything of which the child could claim a sufficiency, it was names; and these had received such solemnization as falls unfrequently to the lot of the lowly.

A many-shrined saint in the calendar of Mother Church had been pronounced his patron.

A worthy man and worthier woman of the flesh, at an early date, after his advent into this valley of humiliation, had stood sponsors at his christening.

The two respectable and most industrious persons, directly responsible for his pres-

ence here, had caused the following entry to be made in the yellow-leaved, dusty, musty date book, filed within the shadowy archives of old St. Francis' Church—"Francisco Sebastian Tomasso Fugazi Giomi, born February 13th, 18—, San Francisco, California."

Despite the foregoing facts, however, he was called Poccacito and Poccacito, so far as this narrative is concerned, he shall remain.

Truth to tell, the sobriquet seemed not inapt, the word Poccacito interpreted from the mellow Latin, being "little one," and, in this instance, apposite; for about the misshapen hump, borne above the boy's narrow shoulders; his spikey arms, lean legs, infantile feet, the weazened countenance, topped by a shock of stringy, unkempt hair, was written the inexorable law of economy.

Never, in all his little life, had Poccacito known what it was to have enough of anything. Scrimped in his food, his clothing, his time, his affections, his education, his companionship, his bit of navigable space, this offspring of human discrepancy pre-

sented a picture, comparable to the desert, if shorn of breadth, length, mirages and skies of cloud and blue.

Mother Nature to Pocalito, *had* been niggardly.

Even his arrival into this world, would, with thankfulness, have been averted. There were so many before him in the cramped quarters, where he first caught the breath of this woe-begotten life! What wonder that *his* diminutive dimensions were there grudgingly given space!

Giomi—the elder—Pocalito's father—was one of the many crab fishermen of San Francisco, who manage to snatch a living from those freakish tides that surge in the short, still hours when "midnight whitens into morn." All weathers—wind, rain, fog, or fair—found this faithful follower of the Apostolic craft on his way to the wide, net-hung wharf by the city's seawall, there to join the swarthy-skinned brotherhood of the low-built, lateen-sailed boats.

The good wife—Pocalito's mother—made the early breakfast and saw that the simple luncheon of bread, meat and wine

was in the hands of her spouse, as he set forth for the long day's "catch."

The real labor of *her* day then began; in that day there was bread to be baked, (bread for eleven) washing of garments for the younger ones, while they slept; breakfast to be prepared and for those in attendance at the day school, certain attentions, as to dress, bestowed. Pocalito, being crippled, was excused from school, and so, the business of tending the baby fell to him.

There was *always* a baby in the Giomi household. During the day, in those hours while baby obligingly slept, Pocalito helped his mother with the weaving, for, in addition to her innumerable tasks, Madama Giomi made and repaired nets, such as fishermen use in their work, thus adding to the family income.

Notwithstanding all this dreadful industry, however, the Giomis were very poor, for crab fishing, in the City of the Golden Gate is a cruel monopoly. The bloused, tam-capped, round-ear-ringed, little brown men of the Latin race, who rise so long before the sun, to face the fickle tides, in the

twilight of the morning, may claim but a small share from their toil's accrument. What, with the wharf hire, net hire, boat hire and demands of the commission merchants, little is left for the crab-fisher's patient pains.

It followed, therefore, that with the best efforts of the united Giomis, they remained at the end of each year, financially, about where they began.

To be sure they owned property, consisting of a bit of ground and a four-roomed timber cottage on Telegraph Hill, an imposing promontory, of superb scenic proportions, but of soil and social texture, conceded to be the poorest upon the whole sea-sprayed peninsula.

A sprinkling of scrub oak, madrone and manzanita comprised its original herbage, but these for the most part, had been cleared, to give place to vegetable gardens, flower beds, a few eucalyptus trees and such sublunary habitations as the Giomi's. 'An enterprising German, tenderly mindful of the Fatherland and his Mother Rhine, had topped the hill with a tower and equipped it with telescopes and other scenic appur-

tenances; a cable, extending from the hill's base to its summit, received the patronage of tourists and the artist class; but this public benefaction, proving a pecuniary failure, resulted in the withdrawal of the cabled coaches.

The tower lapsed into disuse, save for the birds, bats and kindred feathered folk, that lodged in its humanly abandoned battlements.

The Gothic buttresses moulded and rotted under the ocean's ozoned spray; storm, sun and rains left their scars on the grim turrets, all of which gave the hill a complexion of the picturesque.

The Giomis and their neighbors who occupied the lower steeps, gave genuine evidence of the artistic appreciation, as they were wont to speak, with becoming pride, of "our castle."

With their castle of exceptional impressiveness, their legal title to a scrap of earth, their wood cottages, their work and their wage, the hill people occupied, ostensibly, a position of narrow independence. Had their realty remained unto

them inviolate, such position might have been maintained, but unfortunately for them, the bartizan-browed hill contained rock, of a gade desired for street and other public improvements.

Why Nob Hill, Russian Hill, Pacific Heights, or any other residential eminence, within the limits of the many-parapeted metropolis was not sought, for the prescribed grade of rock is not apparent, except that the latter, being homes of the rich, are exempt from municipal molestation.

To a company of sordid street contractors, bent upon getting the most raw material for the least money, what matter, whether or not, a few "Dagos" as they were designated, lost their homes?

Well, indeed, did those politically-favored officials know, the small fry of the hill had not the means for presentation of their claims in court, the contest of injunction suits, neither the needed knowledge of American language and law, requisite to an appeal before a trust-mantled tribunal.

It followed that of the Giomi acreage, which comprised at the date of purchase, a moderately fruitful slope, where flowers

bloomed perennially and succulent vegetables throve and bearded goats browsed and gray stones thrust their scarred faces through twining creepers, naught remained, save a narrow shelf above a sheer wall, which frequent blasting and constant tunneling, threatened sure destruction.

To the hill people, whose estates were thus, by official behest, fast crumbling beneath their helpless feet, no recompense was offered, no reimbursement made.

As Giomi—the elder—watched the foundations of his home being daily carted away, what wonder that he muttered bitterly in the depths of his sun-tanned throat, “God help the poor, the rich can steal!”

From his perch upon the narrow porch, fronting the natal nest, roofing the sheer wall’s surface, where it was his habit to sit in sunny weather and mind the ever-present baby, or help his mother with the never-ending nets, Pocalito likewise watched the gangs of rock-cutters, carters, drillers, blasters, crushers, while engaged in that wanton wreckage of what held all the boy knew of home; but—with impressions vastly different from those entertained by his sire.

In the son's innocent thought, those men, with their cumbersome tools of toil, were simply brethren of the spade, spike, pick and adze, whose constant employment, since he knew not its purpose, furnished sources of human comradeship, which served rather to inspire than depress; for Pocalito was only a child, who knew naught of politics, sociology, injustice, corruption, nor any of the class distinctions borne by the strange systems of men. What, to him, was misery or happiness? pleasure or pain? honor or disgrace? wealth or poverty?

His short life had been eventless and serene as the shining river that flows ever between willow-fringed banks and pebbly shallows, unswollen by shower, unshrunk by drouth, unrippled by reach of summer cloud; but—there came an awakening, when Pocalito was doomed to exchange the sylvan fields of contentment, for the desolating desert of unrest.

To many another, the date is unforgettable; that of the 25th May 1898, when, in response to their country's call, the Native Sons of California, went forth to face the flinty front of war. Volunteers

were wanted for the United States Army in the Philippines and these, our youths, in life's beautiful morning, gathered from hill and vale, meadow and mountain side; forsaking the mines, vines, plow, store, of fice, schoolhouse, mill and whatever else of business or pleasure that engaged them, to don the soldier's garb of blue and grey.

Up from the ranks of the militia they rose, to serve with their brother civilians, all stirred by a kindred sentiment, each moved by a common cause—the defense of their flag. And that flag, as its folds pictured the trafficking streets, streamed from every eminence, curtained the yellow sun, stiffened to every breeze, starred the ships' sails on the blue of the bay, gave eloquent tongue to the cause. It sustained them, as they moved in bayonnetted battalions, from the freshly-tented Presidio, through throng-lined thoroughfares, to the city's water front, amid the deafening din of guns, sirens, bombs, cheers, music, megaphones and all that combined to make pageantry imposing.

"It's all for Old Glory"—they said, in one exultant voice, as the sobs were choked

back, hands clasped, parting tokens exchanged, gift garlands pressed to quivering lips, the final words spoken (brave, noble, heroic words) that told of daring and doing and dying.

Right royally were they escorted, as they sailed through the purple pillared portal—the Golden Gate.

Stately yachts, the offspring of luxury and leisure, spread their snowy sails and condescended to salute the soldier sons of the State. Matronly schooners and lumbering stern-wheelers, vied with one another in solicitude, ear-piercing and prolonged. Tugs, sloops, smacks, brigs and barkentines puffed out their “god-speeds” even to the edge of old Neptune’s main. Stuffy gasoline launches, freighted to perspiring capacity, coughed up their “goodbyes” as far out as the sea swells would let them.

Trim Gussies, Carries, Mamies, Merties, Susies—fair weather built vessels—one and all, with banners fluttering and string bands vibrating, steamed across the bar for the sake of the dear boys. Row boats rose to the occasion, sculling in the shadow of grim gun boats, conveying tender traffic to the

newly created heroes. The launch of the Red Cross, faithful to her merciful ministrations, was the last to take leave of the troopers.

Then, with a farewell from the brazen throats of fortified Alcatraz, which the steadfast hills repeated and re-repeated, the white mists of the sea closed over them and they were gone—as the dream things of our sleep!

Witnessed by Pocalito from his eyrie on the cliff's shelf, these scenes and sounds awoke a wizard wisdom, which bore him far and irretraceably, beyond the border lands of childhood; for with indefinable intuition, the ghostly heritage of the afflicted, he knew, that not for *him* was brass-buttoned uniform of blue, star-blent banner, neighing steed, spirit-stirring drum, shrill trump, nor leaves of bloom and bay.

Not for him the "pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war;" *he* could never be a soldier. With this crushing consciousness, the hump on his back seemed insupportable, his misshapen little feet became enormous leaden clods. With this esoteric glimpse at his own meagerness, a shrivelling

mortification seized him; his clothes, the cast-off of elder brothers, at first hand not by any means first-class, were but shreds and patches. Any old thing was thought to be good enough for a boy to wear, who could not walk and did not go to school.

In the matter of boots, there was, for the little cripple, an even more forlorn disposition, such as fell to him being, not merely second, but third or fourth hand, always ill-fitting, miserably scuffed and down at the heel.

Except a garment, in its tattered insufficiency, caused him to shiver with cold, or a coarse brogan, contained a protruding nail, or a pebble secreted in gaping soles, pierced his flesh, Pocalito had not suffered; he had not felt this mean apparelling to have been a degradation; but, by contrast with the lithe-limbed, straight-backed soldiers, so splendid in their new regimentals upon this, the day of his broader vision, the spectacle of being merely a receiver of discarded clothes, smote him to the heart.

In all his life to come and it widened away interminably, he could not hope to be other than what he was—a domestic dolt,

a drudge, a clod, a cumberer of the earth, a creature in the way. To this starved son of opulent California, the thought, with the swallowing despair of it, gave him a tightening of the throat, akin to strangulation.

How old had he grown in those few hours! To what desert solitudes did he suddenly find himself doomed! There could be no return to the unknowing, indifferent contentment, which had formed the sum of this boy's yesterday. On and on forever, in company with all discoverers, must he yearn and sigh and pine and wait and wonder and despair, for this is the inevitable penalty of progression.

The spring of San Francisco merged into mid-summer, with no discernible change of climate, except for the riotous trade-winds, that rose at each mid-day and continued until set of sun. The vernal hills seared in the sun's searching rays. Flag-lilies ceased to bloom beside star-eyed marguerites. The poppies closed their satin petals to yellow the slopes no more, until next year.

The gossamer haze that hung, as a veil, upon Mount Tamalpais and loftier lifts of

the coast thickened, as it descended and wrapped blanketing folds about the storm-swathed city.

At the Giomi domicile, the passing seasons brought no perceptible change, since life to the poor admits of little variety. Work, always work, from stark morn to starry eve, is the routine, year in, year out. With the excavators of the hill, there occurred a brief suspension of activities and one day, when Giomi—the elder—returned a little earlier than custom usually permitted, from his cruise among the crab caverns, a surprise awaited him in the form of an official visitation; it had been long deferred. The wonder was that it came at all.

The remaining declivity occupied by the Giomi cottage was wanted for the augmentation of public utility, the officials explained. "Could it be—*purchased?*"

With scorn—long smothered—in his sultry eyes, the beggarly bit of Little Italy glared inflammably at some of the minor representatives of the earth's greatest nation and then, in feeble, but feeling English, hissed—

"You takka my land. My goats, they starve. My hens you kill. The cow, she die, she *not* have feed. You gitta my garden. Now you wantta my house. No! No! pigs! thieves! robbers! Go home!"

And so they were dismissed.

Well did Giomi—the elder—know that the price to be proffered for his shrunken estate (the cottage was not wanted) would barely cover the cost of removal, much less purchase a new home elsewhere. The payment of rent was, to him, unthinkable and so, with his growing brood, he remained on the scrappy shelf of stone.

The sun bronzed and brightened it with rays of ruby, amber and jasper, so much more kindly is the Creator than are His creatures.

The autumnal fogs fell protectingly over it, clothing with mantles of pearl, ivory and silver gray, the spare, bald, riven spaces. The winds softened to soothing lullabys, for the trades spent themselves before reaching this sheltered cove upon the hillside.

With the approach of winter the long days shortened. The rain came in torrents, sheets and saturating shrouds; windless,

thunderless, frostless, soundless, straight down from the dun-dyed clouds.

The year passed. With the birth of the new came Pocalito's God-Father, Antoine Martinello, on his annual visit to the gull's nest, as he called Giomi's niche, because a sea gull had once nested there.

Martinello was a vegetable vender, who hawked on the public highway, his own green and succulent wares. "Cauliflowers! Asparagus! Squashes! Lettuce! Celery! Beans! Peas! Cucumbers! fresh, all fresh to-day!"

His cart and horse were familiar in the Latin quarter, as well as a joy to children of the streets, whom he frequently favored with a ride, after the vehicle's contents were disposed of, out, away from their forlorn locality, to where the grass grows and the reaching waves clasp the shore.

When rains prevented this mutually agreeable outing, Martinello held in reserve another means of bringing smiles to the faces of neglected little ones. Of his day's stock in trade, which included some of the seasonable fruits, there was rarely a complete "clean-up." To most venders of per-

ishable stuffs, this condition is deplored; not so, however, with Martinello, since *his* left-over commodities found ready distribution among his little love customers, as they were called,—those waifs of want and woe, whose present needs are ever in excess of their supplies. In San Francisco's poorer districts, herd children, uncensused, that would not, probably, know the taste of California fruits, but for Martinello.

It was his benign front that fell athwart the Giomi threshold, on a morning, heralded by bells and kindred reverberating instruments, as a glad New Year.

"Well, Pocalito!" said the little father, after the conventional salutations were passed,—*"You will soon be ten, almost a man!"* Even as the little father spoke, the words conveyed a misnomer, as Pocalito had never before presented a picture more lean, languid, colorless; more removed from the physical conception of manhood. Moreover, there was, in the boy's haggard countenance, an expression which had not been visible the year previous, one of hopeless depression, pathetic indeed to behold in one so young.

"I see you've been stopping too much in the house!" rejoined Martinello,—*"I must take you out where the sunflowers grow, Eh! Pocalito!"* With this, a glint of what makes the sunflowers turn their faces, crossed the boy's pinched face. "I'll take you to-morrow, if it is fine."

"But—Nannetta—" interposed Madama Giomi, referring to the baby,—*"I not can spare Pocalito."* Here *was* an obstacle, to be sure, but father Antoine proved himself equal to it, by proposing that Nannetta be placed during the brother's absence, in a child's nursery adjacent; in fact, he (Antoine) agreed to carry and fetch her, and so, the mother consenting, Pocalito again saw the source of the sunflowers' growth.

But on the morrow the rain came in sheets,—it would not be amiss to say, blankets—which made the rivuleted, unpaved roads so slippery that Martinello himself could not, with safety, attempt a passage, to say nothing of the danger to beast and cart.

A big wind swept up from the south-lands, hurricaning the hills, skurrying the streets, careering in the valleys, wailing in house

crevices, heightening the whitecaps on the bay. This meant that the rain had come to stay.

Alas! for Pocalito! Alas! for all the children of the little father! To them, the rains bring cold, hunger, disease, death—for without the sun in California, the poor are doubly disinherited; their places of abode being, at best, but small, thin-walled, cheaply constructed timber tenements, unprovided with heating facilities, few of which contain even chimneys.

Cooking, except the family go to restaurants for food, is performed by the aid of coal oil lamps.

The effect of this cramped, cheerless existence upon the little people, is better imagined than described. Happily for them, the rain season varies and is dispelled by sunshine, that signal for outdoor life, welcomed by all growing things. Thrice welcome was the golden globe, in the scrappy tent of blue, visible from the narrow window where Pocalito watched and waited, for he knew the little father would not disappoint him and he *did* not.

In the year of grace here chronicled, there

had been unusual rainfall, alternated by thick fogs and chilling winds, at least, so said the pioneers and they ought to know. "The climate of California is changing. Why! When *we* came here in forty-nine, there was no need of fire in camp, save for cooking; if it keeps on in this way we shall have snow. The change is due, doubtless, to the destruction of the forests. When the snow comes and the big trees are all gone, it wont any more be California for us."

This, the verdict of the path-finders. Hence, it happened, that by the time Antoine and his outfit again appeared on the castellated hill, winter had well nigh passed.

Wistfully had they been awaited and now,—happy Pocalito!

To live but one day in the open, under the wide, paternal sky, away from the thrall-dom of coal oil stoves, grimy walls, sickening stench, net-weaving, baby-minding and all the indoor, enervating, never-ending routine! *This was* happiness!

Night mists yet lingered upon the Marin hills. The near patches of shrub showed

jeweled damps in the struggling beams of the morning, for the day was still young.

"It's going to be fine!"—remarked Martinello, who had made a study of weather as well as of children. "We've waited long for it, haven't we, Pocalito?"

"But—I knew it would come and with it, *you*, pater!" the boy replied.

"Now that I *am* come, how are you, chiquito? How much do you weigh?"

Pocalito's chin fell, his eye-lids drooped, his voice sank almost to a whisper as he said, apologetically — "Only thirty - five pounds."

"Well, we shall pick up now, the rain is over and you'll be able to get into the sun!" responded the little father, hopefully.

The two mounted the cart and mincingly descended the scraggy hill, freshly furrowed by the recent deluge; then—following the cobble-stoned street,—jogged, at a pace as rapid as the nag's capacity permitted, along the dingy, dilapidated, ancient quarter, known as the Barbary Coast; through lurid, narrow-laned, red-lanterned Chinatown; between low, shed-like shops; past gored blocks, glass-fronted grill

rooms; bay-windowed, balconied clubs and caravanseries; frowning facades of brown stone,—the lone, lifeless mansions of the rich—thence to the Old Mission and San Bruno road, that lead to the domain of the dairies and Italian vegetable gardens.

A noticeable pair was Martinello and Pocalito, seen in the tender solicitude of the elder, the helpless dependence, but deferential devotion of the child—a rare combination in a city, conspicuous for its irreverence toward youth and age; its dire dearth of family life.

“They ought to kill us off, directly we’ve turned fifty!” is the tragic declaration of many an old-timer, who finds himself doomed to the forsaken solitudes, because, in earlier years, he ignored the scriptural injunction to “increase, multiply and replenish the earth.”

The lorn and loveless lives, that so frequently end in suicide, in this State of human desolation, bear mute but appalling testimony to the evils of individualism.

Antoine Martinello had grown lean and grizzled in the science of market-gardening, for, when he came with his wife and a col-

ony of immigrants to California, back in the glamorous fifties, his eyes were lustrous, his locks as ringed and jetty, as were those recorded in Holy Writ, which brought delight to the eyes of Judea's daughters, bent, in witching dalliance, toward beauteous Absalom.

Giovanna, the wife, a simple, unschooled soul, met with injury which terminated in death, by the fall of bricks from a chimney, shattered in a second's duration, when an earthquake of memorable severity, toppled about all the soot-pots of the section.

The child, little Antoine, left to the untender mercies of volunteered attention, pined and drooped and soon followed his mother, which doleful domestic event left the young husband and father, doubly desolate. It may have been the love born of the union with those clinging souls, that gave Martinello the look which closely reading people called "haunting." Certain it is, that the photography of affection cannot be effaced. Some remnant of it, even upon faces most seamed with vice, remains until the end of life.

Of the things which had wrought the tell-tale compassion in his countenance, Martinello gave no sign, other than the whitening of his hair, a sphinx-like sculpturing of lips, a settled sadness in his glowing eyes; but, such was the man's unremitting remembrance of his loved and lost, that no woman who bore bundle or baby ever passed his cart on the long country roads, without being graciously invited to ride and rest.

As this singular escort and his small charge, with each turn of the cart wheels, emerged from the city's thronged arteries, into a purer atmosphere of the less populous slopes, new life as it were, infused the boy's feeble frame.

Inhaling the myriad scents, borne, sweet and vivifying, from Mother earth, reborn, it would seem, after the copious rains; beholding the glossy skinned herds of Holsteins, Durhams, Jerseys, Alderneys and their young, that enlivened the billowy grazing grounds, Pocalito could not but feel, to the depths of his starved heart, notwithstanding the hump and the limp, it was

good to live, even though he could never be a soldier.

How cordial the inhabitants of this new wonder land! The butter-cups and daisies nodded their dainty heads as they passed by. A robin sat on a swaying mustard stalk and saluted; as he sang, thus did Pocalito interpret the glad carol,—“Good morning, little brother! I am glad you are here.”

The industrious sparrows found time to say,—“We love you all the better because you are not like other people!” Every streaked, mottled, brown, brindle, or white throat, that lifted from lush leaves where the marsh-mallows bloom, breathed the same gentle salutation. “We are glad you are here, little brother!”

Where moist, loamy sands make velvet walled nurseries for the seeds and bulbs and roots, that nestle beneath ribbon beds of cresses, artichokes, corn and kindred things among earth’s kindly fruits, the patient cart horse stopped.

“While Rhodie has *her* lunch, we shall have *our* breakfast; you must be hungry, Pocalito! I am!” said Rhodie’s master.

The crisp, eager air of the morning *had*

whetted an appetite, customarily torpid, which the lad admitted.

"A Wayfarer's Rest," situated near the garden's margin, received Martinello's order for raviolis.

"Raviolis! a feast dish, Caro!" exclaimed Pocalito.

"Well, why not? I want you to get fat and red, so you shall have milk as well, a whole quart if you can drink it and after the raviolis, I have some bananas for you." What a feast! the like of it Pocalito had not until then, known.

After the breakfast, Pocalito, eager to explore the grounds, hobbled, with as much agility as he could command, about the arborescent aisles, that served to separate the bean beds from tomatoes, squash vines from peas, parsnips from melons and so on, to the toothsome end.

Noting the difficulties of pedestrianism, the boy's guardian, ever solicitous, suggested that he discard his shoes. Whereupon, two tiny feet were slipped from the coarse, misshapen old leather that covered them and unshod, unshackled, the child made better his way over the moist ground

and its green, caressing carpet of young leaves.

Truly, it *was* a sensation which children of larger growth may, with profit, experience—this clasp of our grim but generous old Mother, earth, upon the porous foot soles.

Let those of aching joints and jaded nerves try the experiment.

So gratifying did this promenade prove to the little cripple, that even his infirmity, as an ill-fitting mantle, fell away leaving him rejuvenated, beautiful, strong.

* * * *

That night, when the moon lay upon Telegraph Hill, Poccacito, overcome by the realization of one complete day, slept; but not to awaken, rise before the dawn and resume his accustomed tasks.

Only a shade more waxen, ashen, wraithy, they found him at break of day, clutching in his talon-like fingers, a bunch of withered poppies; a peace not of earth, upon his rigid countenance, for the feeble life had flown; and so, with joy, at last, *was* his *awakening* wrought.

A MEXICAN HOLIDAY

A MEXICAN HOLIDAY.

Walls leaden, arched, tiled, chiseled, balconied, garmented with green; gardens with trees like the elms in a druid forest; fountains splashing in sculptured stone; walks that lead through rainbows of blended bloom; churches domed, spired, bell-hung, furnished with conquestorial trophies; palaces that recall the bastions of Titan homes; lakes shimmering in floods of whitened sunlight; volcanoes wreathed in a purple haze; a chain of encircling mountains curving and melting into mists of turquoise and gold; streets retrospective of battles, sieges, slaughter, paved with pointed cobblestones, lined with facades of frowning gray, swarming with sad-eyed, swarthy, burden-crossed humanity, clothed in rags, devoured by vermin, clamorous for coin.

Estamos en Mejico! (We are in Mex-

ico.) Moreover, we are in the ancient Aztec capital—"glorious, gory Mexico."

It was Sunday. A day of feasts and fetes to the rich—of triple toil to the task-trammeled poor.

What should we do, we few forlorn foreigners, sequestered in a strange land? There is no lack of entertainment in that storied city; but, ah! to choose!

The lovers of the party suggested *La Vega*. There are *gondolas* on *La Vega*, curtained with the national colors, cushioned with fragrant reeds, steered by skilled craftsmen, witherso'e'er the stranger wills, in those cypress-shadowed shoals; past the famous floating gardens, redolent with unnumbered roses, beneath lichen-hung bridges and abandoned causeways, mutely eloquent of a brilliant, barbaric past.

Here, too, are beings fantastically appareled in feather-woven *zarapes* and wreaths of poppies; but *La Vega*, as a Sunday resort, is not sanctioned by the diplomatic arbiters and so, the *gondolas* remained moored in their Roman-arched waters that day; at least, so far as one small party of *Americanos* was concerned. But people

who forswear Venetian barges, foliaged canals, floating gardens and views of crumbling *Casas Grandes* must be amused and the edict of this exclusive class is the bull-fight, (though why the butchery of bulls should be more genteel than the beauties of nature and art, is not apparent), however, there is contagion in custom. To the *Fiesta de Toros* we accordingly went.

There are two *Plazas de Toros* in the City of Mexico: one in the vicinity of *San Cosme*, the other near the northern end of the *Paseo*, that famous, much-frequented boulevard, lined by noble trees, graced by garlanded *gloriettas*, statued by men celebrated in Spanish and Mexican history.

A long line of carriages darkened the drive and fluent crowds clustered so closely about the whirling wheels that a collision, at certain stages seemed imminent. Uniformed gendarmes from the Federal District, with revolvers at their belts and clubs in their hands, succeeded, to some extent, in maintaining order.

Greasy, wrinkled creatures, clad in untanned skins kept pace with the coaches; they stop and a scramble ensues among

this slimy fraction of the great unwashed, for the honor of swinging open the doors, which secures to them the few *centavos* expected for this service.

We are at the Amphitheatre. The crowd thickens; all around it is a perfect hive; ticket speculators are on the alert; they have need of deputies and a hundred hands. Venders of fruit and *dulces* fill the air with their cries; water carriers from caverns cool are reaping their harvest; beggars, thieves, destroyers of human confidence in every form, are making the most of their opportunity.

There are also guides in ready attendance, who, for a stipulated sum, will conduct one to those mysterious precincts behind the barriers, sacred to the gladiators and their associates, thence to the dark enclosures where the doomed brutes are confined.

Here, too, are their co-workers—the interpreters—who profess to translate every language, living or dead; instruct the stranger in the arts of tauromachy, or escort him to the chapel, where mass is celebrated for the *toreros* who go there to pray,

confess and be absolved before confronting the bulls.

Boletos de Sombre (shade tickets) were secured (tiny rolls of tissue paper resembling homeopathic powders) and we pass into the domain of chivalry, as practiced by the Castilian nobles, who likewise welcomed the *auto-de-fê* and the perfume of burning flesh; yet bull fighting, bloody and brutal, as it may seem to dwellers in Northern latitudes, is an art so intricate and exhilarating, as to have commanded the attention of the foremost sovereigns of the world.

Charles V of Spain was an ardent lover of the sport and in the reign of Philip IV, tauromachy was in its zenith. The grandson of Philip II fought with much success in the arena, in emulation of his illustrious ancestor Charles V; but it was a young nobleman named Pedro Romero, who bears the honor of having established the art of tauromachy, as, up to his time, toward the end of the eighteenth century, bull fighting was simply a savage butchery, devoid of that grace of movement and extraordinary skill, which now forms the chief charm of the spectacle.

Pedro Romero compiled for these performances a set of rules, which became the standard code of the combat, giving at the same time, practical instructions to his contemporaries in the principles of the art by a heroic exposure of his own life, with such effect that his name endures in the annals of the arena, as that of the most illustrious of the *espadas* of Spain.

The history of bull fighting in Mexico is but another chapter in this fascinating sport; for there are ladies who dream of it; ministers who neglect their affairs for it; laborers who sacrifice their *cigarritos* to save a few *reales* for the day of the fray.

It begins at three o'clock, but long before that hour the amphitheatre is compactly filled, such is the national ardor. The utmost animation prevails; men and women greet one another joyfully, frantically, after the fashion of the effusive Southern race; fans are fluttered, heads are nodding, arms are gesticulating; the varied colors,—the *mantillas*, shawls, *zarapes*, par-asols, the murmur of many voices,—all contribute to the general gayety.

The amphitheatre, divided by silver sunshine and sepulchral shade, is encircled by seats in boxes, balconies and tiers, priced according to location; those in the sun are inexpensive and occupied by the poorer classes.

The arena is similar to a circus ring in the United States, though much larger, enclosed by a barrier about six feet high, separated by a narrow passage from another barrier, still higher. The first barrier is leaped by the performers, sometimes by the maddened bulls.

Four roads, nearly equi-distant, lead to the ring: one for the *toreros*, one for the bulls, one for the horses and one for the heralds of the show. Above the bulls' entrance is a balcony, where sit or stand the members of the municipality, who give the signals, blow the trumpets and superintend the ceremony. Each entrance of the performers is announced.

A signal from the band first warns the assembled spectators that the exhibition is about to begin. The audience is stilled; the sound of voices is no longer heard; every eye is dilated and this is what they see.

Six horsemen mounted upon steeds, showily caparisoned; on their heads are plumed sombreros; at their sides are swinging swords; each wears a short, black mantle; their feet and lower limbs are encased in yellow leather, spurred at the heel. Slowly they make the circuit of the arena; when they take their positions, each face is turned toward the President's box; two by two they halt before the door of the *toril*, still closed.

The band booms on; another door opens, another trumpet; it is the signal for the *cuadrilla* (company of bull fighters). First come the two *primas espadas* (star bull fighters) dressed with imposing effect. Elaborate embroideries completely cover their closely fitting jackets, short at the back, cut away in front, fringed, tasseled, filagreed at the shoulder; spangles seam their scarlet knee breeches; yellow silk sashes, fringed at the ends, girdle their loins; flesh-colored silk stockings and satin slippers envelop their shapely extremities; capes of vermilion velvet, richly corded and tasseled, a queue of netted hair, pomponed turban, bound with black fur — the *toreros'* Tam

O'Shanter — completes this striking costume.

After the *espadas* come the *banderilleros* and *capadores*, similarly, but less richly arrayed; then the *picadores* on horseback, carrying long lances, wearing buffalo-skin trousers, quilted with strips of iron for protection against the *toro's* thrusts. The *chulos* bring up the rear. All are finely formed men—compact, sinewy, lithe, with dark faces and large, lustrous eyes; they too, assemble before the President's box, saluting him with the grace of a Chesterfield. The key of the *toril* is then dropped into the ring. A guard picks it up and stations himself in readiness to open the door; the *espadas* separate, the *chulos* prepare their cloaks, vivid as the first rays of the morning; the *banderilleros* secrete themselves behind the barriers; the *picadores* adjust their lances; again the signal; the door of the *toril* is flung open.

A tumultuous shout issues from thousands of throats, as a black monster, with red, blazing eyes, cruel, crescent horns, thick, ropy neck, pricked and bleeding from a spiked ribbon rosette, shoots into the arena.

Doomed though he be, to butchery, prolonged and ceremonious—no prima donna, with the voice of a nightingale and a reputation international,—ever was the recipient of wilder applause. A *chulo* waves a provoking cloak; the bull makes a dash at it; in a twinkling the agile *chulo* is behind a barrier.

The particular business of these acrobats is to irritate the bull, waving the bright flags in his face. Bewildered, he sweeps upon a *picador*, and raising him, horse and all, flings him down into the dust. "*Bravo, toro!*" shout the spectators. "*Pobre caballo!*" murmured a velvet-eyed *senorita* near me, behind her fan.

The Mexicans are a strange mixture of sympathy and cruelty. The *picadores* are the first to receive the attack of the bull; with their long lances planted firmly between his horns, they attempt to ward him off; if they do not succeed in planting them, the bull thrusts his horns through the horse and the *picador* falls with his vanquished steed.

While the bull is extricating his horns, the *capadores* come forward and wave their

capas across his eyes, to attract his attention, causing him to follow them and to save the fallen cavalier, whom the *chulos* assist into his saddle. If the horse has the strength to stand, he is again attacked and disemboweled; otherwise he remains reeking in his bath of gore, until kindly death comes to his deliverance.

Of all the participants in this barbaric tournament, none merit so large a share of sympathy as do those spavined, knock-kneed, old, blindfolded, utterly defenseless nags, fated to the most frightful death, without even the ghost of a chance of resistance.

Man, of all animals, is the only one that preys upon the defenseless.

They continue to tease him—these human monsters — with their fiery mantles, their seductive costumes, their exquisite agility, their tantalizing tricks; reeking with rage, he seeks to bury his horns in their flesh but his nimble tormentors are more than a match for him. Not until the signal sounds for their retirement, do they cease their ferocious sport.

Then the *banderilleros* appear upon the scene. It is the office of those gentry to

plant barbs in the neck of the bull; these barbs are about a yard in length, ornamented with parti-colored paper, furnished with a metallic point and so made as to render withdrawal impossible when once stuck into the flesh. The pierced animal, struggling to free himself, only drives them further in. This is most exquisite torture and yet six, eight, sometimes ten pairs are planted, causing the blood to cover the victim like a purple shroud.

The ambition of the *banderilleros* is to place these prongs evenly and symmetrically, one on each side of the vertebrae. For this feat, great agility, firm hands and perfect accuracy of eyesight are required; if they fail, they will be pierced like the poor horses.

The code of Romero decrees that the performers must stand, not more than fifteen paces in front of the bull, without flag, lance or sword and await the attack; infuriated he rushes at them. As the head is lowered, the *banderillero* makes his thrust and then steps neatly aside. Now frenzied with resentment, the bull turns upon his tormentors, only to receive another prong in

his palpitating flesh.

How horrible he is now, with his foaming nostrils, blazing eyes, writhing tail and reeking back, while above—"picture it, think of it"—is the tender blue sky and a few fleecy clouds. Here was heinous work in the face of heaven.

Again the signal! The spectators have been sufficiently entertained by the *banderilleros*; this only is the excuse for their forbearance. It is then that the hero of the hour, the *prima espada*, appears upon the scene for the final feat.

With the dignity of a despot, the apparel of an Asiatic prince, a two-edged toledo blade and a flaming *muleta*, he advances to the center of the ring, removes his turban, bows first to the President, then to the populace, raises his sword, kisses it and in a clear, distinct voice, asks permission to kill the bull.

"You may fight him," answers the President. He greets the honored privilege with a gracious smile, a gentle inclination of the head. "One of us must die"—he says, with heroic humility which becomes him well. Then he crosses himself and invokes the pro-

tection of his patron saint; he has need, for here is an animal of enormous strength, ferocious, bleeding, maddened by prolonged torture, bellowing for revenge and a man seductively dressed, alone, defenceless, save for the sword in his hand. He has need too, of skill, courage, pride, perhaps the prayers that are being breathed for him, for his *querida* (sweetheart), one at least, is there in the balcony above, with her glittering eyes upon him. The strained glances of thousands are concentrated. Not a voice, not a whisper is heard.

The audacious *espada* provokes attack by waving his *muleta* before the bull, across his very eyes, who dashes at it, hits the cloth and strikes—empty space; he has stepped aside in the nick of time, the horns barely grazing his hip. "*Bueno, bueno,*" yells the sunny side. The shady side contents itself with hand-clapping. The *querida* in the balcony, snatches the bouquet she wears in her corsage and throws it at him; more bouquets follow, more hand-clapping; bets are made and money staked.

The *torero* has done what man can do in that radiant land to commend himself to the

favors of the fair, for these fellows enslave hearts as well as slay bulls. Seven times by the dexterous use of his flag, the *espada* invites attack from the goaded beast and seven times, by a dainty movement, he averts death.

Suddenly he ceases this seeming by-play and takes aim, straight into the great eyes of the wondering animal, stung to the extremity of desperation by these varied types of torture; his nostrils emit a vaporous mist, his swollen tongue protrudes, about his hoisted horns and wrinkled neck there is blood — blood in blotches, rivulets, wreaths. Every throat is elongated. Opera glasses are adjusted, fans have ceased to flutter. The vast audience, tumultuous in less perilous feats, is now petrified. Again the beast dashes at the man, but this time he does not step by—he lifts his sword; it is the *coup de grace*—and it falls in a flash of silver, over the horns—lowered for the last time—down, down through the quivering flesh, and bloody vertebrae, to the vital spot. At the feet of the conqueror he falls—dead.

It is the supreme expression of physical skill. Then there was a shower of canes,

hats, cigars, flowers, kisses, coin; men shouted, stamped, applauded, wild with delight; women waved their handkerchiefs, *mantillas*. A hurricane of hurrahs greeted the victorious gladiator, who bows and smiles and poses and rests upon the hilt of his sword, which he has drawn from the wound and wiped with his *muleta*, torn and smeared by the combat.

His adversary has fought valiantly, but—to the victor belongs the spoils. "*Que-solo-den*," shout the populace (give him the bull.) He bows again blandly, with the grateful grace of a Talma; then he stoops and cuts the right ear of the dead animal, that it may be designated from others in the slaughter house hard by and amid vociferous, delirious, infectious applause he retires from the arena.

The band, which has been dispensing rapturous strains, suddenly changes to a dirge for the dead *toro*, now being drawn out by four mules, showily decorated with tinkling bells, feathers and little flags.

The most important actor in this barbarous tragedy is then skinned, cut, sliced

and sold, the proceeds of which, in this case, went to swell the receipts of the triumphant *matador*.

When six or eight animals are similarly slaughtered; when the arena is scattered with smoking intestines, bones, bits of flesh, blotches of blood and other remnants of the vanquished; when bats and kindred night-birds that lodge in crannies among the loftier altitudes of the amphitheater, have scorched their wings by the flaring lights substituted for the sun—after his daily voyage across the beautiful valley is ended; and the still, white stars look down—the show is over.

From the "Californian," May, 1892.

CHIEF SKOWL'S REVENGE

CHIEF SKOWL'S REVENGE.

A land of myths and mists and mystery; ice-blocked, rock-locked, storm-rocked: land of the alluring moraine and treacherous tundra! The pitiless trail and hungry wolf-pack; of frosts, famine and fever; of vanishing moose, bear and cariboo; of glaciers ghostly, cloud-lent, tide-rent, sun-blent! Land of the El Dorado, the bonanza, the blood-red aurora borealis; the rainbow's end, beyond the circle of silence! Alaska!

Strange, surpassing human ken, would it be, had such land not begotten strong women and men.

In the winter of 1882, there died one of the most remarkable men Alaska has ever produced. This was Skowl, chief of the Eagle clan of the Kaigani, or Haida Indians, who at Kasa-an on the east side of Prince of Wales Island, long held lordly and autocratic sway.

Skowl was one of the last of the old school chieftains, ruling his people with the proverbial rod of iron, holding them to their faith and preserving amongst them, the traditions and customs of their forefathers; he was always an enemy of the missionaries, resisting their encroachments to the end. In his later years Skowl was distinguished for his wealth, obesity and intemperance, as well as for his firmness of character and ungovernable temper when aroused. For many years his weight was considerably more than three hundred pounds.

As a young man his mental superiority, physical powers, great wealth and family influence gave him much prominence among his people, these qualities and acquisitions being held in equally as high esteem in aboriginal tribes as they are in civilized circles.

At the date of Skowl's death, his village held seventeen great lodges and the three-score, or more tall and weirdly-carved totem poles that stood before them, grossly testified to the high rank of their builders. These totems constituted the

finest collection of the kind in Alaska. The village is now nearly deserted, the people having scattered to the canneries or joined other settlements. The totem poles remain, though decaying, moss-grown and mutilated by alien miscreants, in mute memorial of the traditions of a vanishing race. These emblems are expressive of more than crests and arms of continental noblemen, as they bear, not only the insignia of rank, but the history, in carven stone and wood, of the Indians who own them.

During the troublesome times of the early American occupation, Kasa-an bay was the theatre of incidents memorable and exciting. One of these formed the subject of a narrative, related to a number of willing listeners,—myself among them—in the cabin of a coast steamer, that regularly furrows those fascinating fjords, channels, inlets, straits—in that far-reaching continent of the midnight sun.

The narrative runneth thus:

In the summer of 1866 there came, one day, an unfamiliar but friendly boat to the beach of Kasa-an and was straightway landed among the splendid array of canoes

that gave Skowl the finest fleet of well-manned craft then traversing the inland Aslaskan waters. Many times in triumph had they returned through the giant granite gateway that arches the entrance of this harbor of the hostile chief, after dispensing war and wailing to pirates, robbers and marauding bands that trespassed upon the green-watered dominions of this king of the Kaiganees.

In the boat was an easy-mannered, persuasive, pliant young Russian, Baronovich by name, who bore gifts to Skowl, of strange device and unknown value, from the distant dominions of the great White Czar, whose faithful subject he claimed to be. Being active, teachable, insinuating and of the stuff that diplomats are made, Baronovich soon ingratiated himself with the old chief and in time became an inmate of his dwelling, a log cabin of spacious dimensions, guarded, grim and sentinel shrouded, by looming totems.

Smooth talking and tactful, with such argument as he was master of, won, ere many moons had aged, the stubborn warrior from his accustomed reserve. By his substantial

assistance young Baronovich succeeded in establishing a flourishing fishery at the head waters of Karta bay, a score or more marine leagues from Skowl's headquarters. With this advance to the dignity of proprietorship and prosperity, came the aspiration for closer relations with the chief, relations which would secure the adventurer unlimited power. This, he knew, could best be effected by the possession of Oolalla, the belle of the region, the idolized and only daughter of Skowl.

What wonder that Oolalla was universally admired and beloved! She was young, dignified of demeanor, lithe of limb, raven-tressed, clear-eyed, with the bluest of Alaska's best blood in her veins, the Kaiganees being the flower of the native races.

There was no lack of suitors among her own race and rank. Numerous blankets and beautifully woven baskets, with rich trophies of the land and sea were laid at her feet, for with tangible offerings, abundant and marketable, are the maidens of Alaska won.

Baronovich conformed to the Haidan custom; but when he flung the fruits of his

arrows, his spear, his nets, harpoons and other implements of the chase, as tribute to the winsome Oolalla, the old chief shook his head ominously and bade the would-be wooer depart with his spoils.

Alone with the only object of his affection, the king of the Eagle clan, in his own terse tongue, questioned the girl.

"Oolalla, dost thou love the pale-face?"

"He is to me," answered Oolalla,—"as the white moon in the winter night; as the sun in the ice cave; as the rain on the leaf!"

"The gods forbid it," groaned Skowl.

But what the fleet deer, surprised in the forested fastnesses of the Fairweather; the sinuous seals that crimsoned the turquoise fathoms of Tolstoi bay with their life-blood and then lay prone at the point of the spear; what the combined traffic of the tides, the shoals, the hills and the lordly Yukon failed to secure, was accomplished at length by fire-water (brandy) plenteous in quantity, inflammable in quality, distilled by the Russian at Karta bay and conveyed to Skowl's retreat at Kasa-an and there distributed in overflowing flagons.

It followed that at a certain date recorded in Haidan council chambers, after the midnight sun had sunk behind blood-red bastions of cloud and mountain crest, beyond the cedar-plumed parapets that formed the western wall of this Prince of the Alexandrian archipelago; while the unsuspecting chief, steeped in stupifying draughts, slept on his shaggy skins and the guards were likewise locked in inebriated lethargy; a light canoe, lanterned only by an ivory-horned moon, was loosed from its moorings by Baronovich, who, with Oolalla, swiftly skimmed the silvery surfaces with muffled oars.

On the opposite shore they were joined by a Russian priest. At dawn, when these twain were made one, by the irrevocable ritual of the Greek Church, the greedy soul of the surreptitious groom was satisfied. He had triumphed at the expense of Skowl.

For a time all went visibly well. The old chief seemed to accept the situation stolidly, as became one whose plight is irremediable, though his heart hungered, his blood bubbled for the revenge so sweet to the savage.

Baronovich was on the way to becoming a rich man, albeit his sinister nature and avaricious policy prevented the respect and confidence of his bride's people, who continued, notwithstanding the changed relations, to work with him. He wished to gain money rapidly and was ready to employ any means compatible with that purpose.

It was Baronovich, who, in 1868, with a small schooner, the property of Skowl and manned with seal hunters supplied from the chief's village, made a mysterious voyage to the westward and returned with 9000 seal skins, thus beginning that shameful pelagic seal killing, or raiding the rookeries, that has diminished their number and caused so much controversy between England and the United States.

Baronovich was a man of energy and resources—well qualified for the achievement of what the world calls success.

After the establishment of his fishery it became the headquarters for smuggling operations, so rife during the first years of American ownership of Alaskan territory. The harbor was visited by revenue cutters,

when warnings were given, but as nothing unlawful could be proven, the place escaped official interference.

Troubles, however, had begun, which multiplied as time wore on. Skowl's antagonism, smothered though it had been, was intensified rather than appeased by the passage of time and events. It was Skowl who had staked and outfitted Baronovich, thereby placing him in a position to make money, but Skowl received no portion of the profits, as per agreement, no returns from his hazardous investments. Angry words, threats and quarrels became of daily occurrence, which resulted in the complete withdrawal of Baronovich's forces, who, under Skowl's command would no longer work for the self-alienated son-in-law. The attempt to bring Indians from other villages to supply their place made matters worse and led to sanguinary encounters.

At last Baronovich was in despair, his sources of revenue being completely cut off his father-in-law continuing implacable.

Skowl was not less clever than Baronovich. Seeing the success achieved by the sealing voyage, he proceeded to outfit a

schooner on his own account, imported a captain from Victoria to navigate her, put the same crew aboard, that had served the Russian and was rewarded with equally as great a success. The schooner came back loaded to the scuppers with salted seal skins.

Then came a period of revelry and rejoicing at Kasa-an. Great brewings of *hoochinoo*, that deadly native spirit distilled in old coal oil cans, from yeast and molasses, mixed with flour, which carries more frenzy in each drop than any other liquid under the sun, were freely imbibed by the boisterous Bacchanalians, who knew no phase of holiday save in laxity and license.

Meanwhile Baronovich, at Karta bay, heard the news of the safe return from Behring Sea with the rich cargo of skins; likewise the wild celebration, prolonged without hint of cessation.

Dark and revengeful thoughts entered his brain, accentuated by fallen fortunes, the paralysis of power, the triumph of his enemies. The green-eyed monster, jealousy, glared in those silent chambers where pride had sat enthroned. Designs deep and in-

tricate, brooded, bat-like, beckoning him on to further ventures. Plots, woven with disastrous chances, yet pregnant with coveted possibilities bewildered, but in the end bore the ashen fruits of action.

This was his plot. He knew the log hut where the skins would be placed; he knew, also, that in the heat of the carouse they would not be guarded closely. Calling together the few renegade Indians remaining with him, he ordered the launching of a large canoe and with them propelled unobserved, to a point not far distant from Kasa-an, there waiting, hidden until the night for the plan's fulfillment.

The rainy season which causes darkness and thick fog, greatly facilitated their project.

A little after midnight, the canoe, stealthily paddled, reached the beach nearest the storehouse; it was, as they anticipated, without locks, bars, or guards. With cat-like activity, the work of carrying the skins began and soon the canoe was piled with the costly peltry. Several trips were found necessary for the conveyance of the store. While making the last one they were dis-

covered by a stroller on the beach, whose instant outcry peopled the strand with excited Indians, all shouting and waving their weapons, but too much surprised and befuddled with base decoction to act effectively.

Baronovich succeeded in launching his canoe, but the load was heavy and the rowers few and so they drifted helplessly in the rain-robed night. The first struggling gleams of the morning revealed the fact that they were followed. In the prow of a craft powerfully manned, stood the gigantic figure of Skowl, drunken and distorted with rage, but fluent with imprecations upon his crafty son-in-law, who struggled frantically in his efforts to escape, but it was a task futilely attempted. Skowl, when close upon him, raised his arm, brandished his spear and cast it with all his strength at Baronovich; it struck, pinning him to the boat's bottom.

Skowl gave a yell of exultation, crying out that *he* never needed to strike an enemy twice.

Indifferent to the fugitive's immediate fate, as he thought him dead, he ordered

the overhauling of the spoils and their return to the storehouse whence they were taken.

Fortunately for Baronovich, the arm of Skowl, unsteady from drink, lodged the spear in his shoulder instead of a more vital part, as had been intended; though writhing in agony, he gave orders to those who compassionately attended him, to steer their depleted craft back to Karta bay.

At the fishery Oolalla received her husband with mingled grief, alarm and foreboding; she knew her father's vindictive nature too well to imagine he would not follow up the work of the morning; her first thought was flight to some other village, but Baronovich, though still alive, was weak and helpless from loss of blood and begged not to be disturbed. Fearful of the vengeance of Skowl, his men had all deserted him and so flight was impossible.

Oolalla, alone with her mangled husband and tender infant, had immediate need of the courage bequeathed by her Spartan antecedents, for her plight was pitiable; her isolation, however, was soon interrupted by

a fleet of canoes, steering straight for the fishery landing, crowded with whooping warriors, all on vengeance bent.

The canoes shot forward and were soon shored. Skowl headed the procession directed toward the dwelling of the man disgraced. A being of fearful mein he was, with features distorted by rage and revelry, the eagle plumes upon his disheveled hair wind-rent, his ponderous frame clad in the habiliments of savagery and the weapons of destruction.

Oolalla, as he approached, barred the doorway with her presence.

"The thief who has robbed me! Where is he?" shouted Skowl, seeking to shake her aside.

"Father, what would you do with him?" shrieked Oolalla.

"Kill him as I would a wolf that stole my meat," spit the angry assailant.

"Kill me, if you will, but spare him!" pleaded the tearful and terrified girl.

"Come home with me, Oolalla," said her father. "You shall be to us as you were before the fox came."

"Without him—never!" was the answer.

The chief entered the dwelling and would have finished by another spear thrust the object of his wrath, who lay fainting in his bed, had Oolalla not snatched her infant from the mat where it lay and held it between its father and her own.

Skowl had never seen his grand-son, though he had been informed of its advent at Karta bay and now he looked at it, with a glance that shifted.

"Kill it and me!" still pleaded Oolalla—"but spare him!"

He could have done so, with one crunch of his sinewy clasp, as the little brown one lay there in it, limp and dimpling, but at sight of the small face that smiled so confidently in his, the tears and entreaties of its mother, the suffering man writhing in his bunk, the stony heart of the warrior softened and instead of carrying out his purpose of avenging the wrong perpetrated upon him and the gods of his race, he bade Oolalla return with her child, to his home.

Then, in his arms, he lifted Baronovich and bore him to a canoe and wrapped him in soft skins and when all were aboard, gave orders for the crow's route to Kasa-an.

There, Shamans, or medicine men, the most skilled of the Eagle-totemed tribe, were strictly charged to minister to the sick son-in-law, at peril, if need, of their own lives. Baronovich, natively strong and attended by those twin magicians—love and skill—soon recovered.

As long as his benefactor lived, they thereafter dwelt in harmony and the feasts and dances of those last days of the chief of the Kaiganees, are still famous along the length and breadth of Alaska.

Thus, with love instead of hate, did Skowl wreak his revenge.

A HEROINE OF DIPLOMACY

A HEROINE OF DIPLOMACY.

An erstwhile portly porter of the "Sunset Route," who held in his sooty palms—if not the destiny of transcontinental travelers—a goodly share, at least, of creature comfort, received upon the occasion of a hurried tour, an unaccustomed tip, as a passenger entered the north-bound Pullman "Pizarro" at Houston, Texas.

On that mid-August day, the traveler, a lady unattended, was mindful of the smiting sun, sitting like a ball of flame in the brassy sky; the desert sands, fine as sifted wheaten flour, that defies exclusion; the stifling noons, the withering winds, the low-hung, languorous moons, that flood the stark spaces of the Lone Star State.

By reason of these debilitating conditions, the delicate passenger would require iced beverages and stimulating bits from the buffet; blinds must need be

drawn, screens adjusted, netting draped, pillows beaten and portieres parted, that the indolent breeze, so vagrantly wafted across the face of that far expanse, might have what sway it would.

The young lady's necessities, always numerous, were in this instance, augmented by lack of the entourage, which had previously accompanied her frequent scampers across continent and impossible of anticipation, save from the Ethiopians in blue serge and brass buttons, who preside so imperiously over the helpless subjects in their desultory domain—"and so"—said the gentle passenger, in an indulgent little voice—"he will earn his fee."

She had read of Death Valley, the delusive mirage, the devastating simoon, border bandits, venomous reptiles, the wild famishing beasts that roam the arid mesas and the question—"Shall I escape those perils?" thrust itself—unbidden—upon her.

Since, however, in the glamorous lexicon of youth, courage springs eternal, no hint of horror ruffled the speaker's tuneful voice, as she said, at the threshold of the "Pizarro" to the black that barred it—

"Porter—may I trouble you to place these parcels?" indicating, at the same time, the presence of a small servitor at her heels, of conspicuous evidence, who struggled bravely under the weight of numerous appendages.

"Here's luggage, as they say in Lunnon. A kit for a minstrel star. What a tramp feeling it gives one to go about like this, alone! But Susanna wouldn't budge! She couldn't be gotten out of Galveston. She had a right, I suppose, to stay with her old mammy if she wished, but—it's mighty hard on *me*."

This in mental soliloquy. "That is all Skiddy, goodbye!" to the boy.

"Are *you* the attendant for this coach?" to the porter.

"Yes, lady."

"Show me to this section, please!" was the order, given in mild authority, as the proper tickets were displayed. Relieved of bags, bundles, band-boxes, parasols, a camp-stool, umbrellas, a camera, cane, fishing-tackle, an easel, a caged cockatoo and a banjo in its case, all of which were assigned to the commodious compartment, corre-

sponding to the numbered tickets, the well-outfitted tourist sank into her cushions with a sense of security, remote indeed, from nightmares of bandits, beasts, or other banes of border lands.

"Excoose me!"

It was the porter whose presence jarred, for with an assumption inseparable from the Divine right of sovereigns, the world over, he spoke.

"I *has* strict awdahs, lady, not to let no birds nor dogs in heah. I has to take *it* to de baggage car, right now!" and his big, black eyes rolled resolutely in the direction of the bird's green plumage.

"Well!" came the response,—*"If those are official orders I must submit, I suppose, but I'm sorry, as she is good company. Don't put her where it is dark, she'll grieve herself to death—poor thing! Give her a lump of sugar—will you, please?"*

"Pretty Polly—good-bye—until to-morrow!"—was the parting salutation, as the porter, cage in hand, made his exit.

"Good-bye—Nattie!"—came the shrill, quavering accents from the talking bird.

"I've gave her de sugah, lady!" announced the supple attendant, upon his return.

"Thank you!" replied polly's mistress—"I shall appreciate your care of her during this run, since *I* am not permitted; look in on her every little while, will you? and here's for your bother!"—placing, at the same time, a piece of money in his ever open palm—"now what shall I call *you*?"

"I's Samson, lady, Sam-son Dow, at yoah sahvice and de bird's!"—was the answer, with the surrendering suavity of his race and a greedy grip at the coin.

"Samson! a good name, from the Bible, I suppose you know. Shall I call, if I need anything?"

"Suah! lady, or touch dat bell"—he designated the wire connection—"and I'll come on de run." And Samson, with the unerring intuition of the servile, the illiterate, accepting the dismissal, vanished, as swiftly and silently as a good darkey should.

Soon the screech of engines, the clang of bells, the smoke, soot, rattle and roar of a moving train, reminded the traveler

that her ride across the valley of desolation was under way.

Between Houston and San Antonio, there are few stations touched by the "Overland"—and these are uninteresting, save to students of the coarser types of humanity.

In the hovels, shacks, leantoos, wicki-ups and similar shifts for human shelter, that wart the wide expanse, herd haggard gamblers, gaunt cowboys, low-set greasers, beseeching beggars, sullen desperados, adventurers and outlaws of all nationalities, each bent to the same purpose—summed up in one word—plunder.

There was little in it, to invite the interest of refinement and so, our traveler drew her blind to exclude the repellent pictures that avarice, ignorance, selfishness and crime, had imprinted upon the bare face of nature. Since the panoramic scenes were so repugnant, her gaze sought the interior amenities; meeting it, were hangings, wrought in designs copied from costly tapestries; globes and glass, so stained as to soften the glow of night lamps and the too ardent rays of the sun.

Windows of grim embrasure were shut in by thick casements, screened, heavily curtained, rodded, ringed. Fans in palm and bamboo, of mechanism designed for diffusion of the sluggish air, swayed to and fro. Arm-chairs, tables, foot-rests, couches, cushions, pillows, one and all, combined to veil the sun-tanned face of that long, lone land.

Would she read? Open books were before her, profusely pictured, many of them portraying in fluent English, the marvels of the route over which she traveled. Anon, her eyes fell tenderly upon a letter of recent date, crumpled, almost ragged, from frequent perusal.

It was addressed—Miss Natalie Breckenridge, Beach Hotel, Galveston, Texas, and ran thus:

“HOME, San Francisco, California, August —, 19—.

MY DEAR CHILD:—

Your telegram recalled me from the red-woods, where I have been deer-hunting. Splendid sport, that, among the forest kings, up there between the snows and the sea. Ah! Nattie, child, could *you* paint the dawns as I saw them, above the clouds, your old Daddy might cherish the hope of going down to pos-

terity with his name written upon the frill of your frock—but—I won't gush. Why didn't you tell me you needed money? Don't wait until you are broke and then interrupt my dog-days. I left the city to escape such afflictions as letters, dispatches and telephone calls. What in *the* world are you doing down there in the Lone Star State so long?

Have you struck oil or a cattle king?

It's all one I suppose! In either case, you'll have no further use for *me*. O! well! What are we old fellows for anyway, except to put up the coin?

Telegraphed you a hundred dollars, as requested. Hope you'll use it to come home with. It's lonely there, since—however, I'm not complaining. If your dear mother had lived, perhaps you would not have so much cared to go about the world. Well! whatever betides, remember, Nattie, that your mother was noble and your father's house, as long as you need it, is yours.

Paternally, with love,
JEROME BRECKENRIDGE."

"Dear old Daddy—I'm coming, coming as fast as steam and wheels will bring me, coming to stay,"—murmured Nattie, with filial feeling. But, not by the most reassuring of letters, plentiful books, bright hopes and a transcontinental railroad's best service is the soul sustained.

A sense of isolation, which the sumptu-

ous surroundings but served to emphasize, became more oppressive, as the journey progressed; for, by the bars of gold that emblazoned the Western horizon; by the billowy ridges that seemed to rise, like rose-hued islands, out of the sea of scrubby mesquite and chaparral; by the slim shadows cast by gaunt trees, the solitary traveler knew that the day was approaching its close.

The conductor had made his rounds, punched her ticket, mopped his perspiring brow with a rag of silk, made some commonplace remark about—"Travel being light this hot weather!"—and—passed on. Then, for lack of anything better to do, crawled into his bunk.

"What queer people we Americans are!"—he muttered in drowsy soliloquy—"In no other country on earth would a nice, slip of girl be let go about alone, sleeping on a shelf, eating at the hands of a strange servant—but, she's no kin of mine, so why bother? What's that about the perpetuity and dignity of a nation depending upon the protection of its virgins? I've heard or read it somewhere, but can't for

the life of me place it," and—dazed by the majesty of the sentiment, or enervated by the climate, or both, the man dozed off.

Samson had served the girl's supper and cleared away the scraps.

There had been no stops, no passengers. The Pullman was still all her own. Seeking a window, she saw, by the hurrying twilight, the lean, long-horned, ill-favored kine, that roam those unhindered plains, start, affrighted, at the train's glowing head-light and run, to the shelter of the slanting knolls, for the sake of their poor lives.

The cranes stalked away, like worn sentinels and then merged into the enveloping shades.

The golden bars melted into mauve and turquoise and silver gray.

The stars twinkled out their evening salutation to the cactus blossoms.

The wild hens, with strangely plaintive wail, gathered home their wandering broods.

All things of the desert welcomed the restful dusk.

"Samson"—said the psychic student of

these mystic forces, when they had, each, merged into a mass, undistinguishable, unfathomable, incomplete—

“Would you mind doing my berth early?”

“Suh—no, lady. I’s not ovah busy!”—he replied and with alacrity, proceeded to his task.

“Escoose *me!*” he rejoined—“Yoah jes’ bettah let me shet dat win-der; the skeeters’ll be in heah, a perfect hive; I’ll put de wiah screen in ef yoah says so, but lemme tell yo, chile, it’s not ovah safe; we’ll be a gwoine thro’ de bad lands, putty soon.”

“The Bad Lands?—Samson!”

“Didn’t yoah nevah hear tell of de Bad Lands, chile, twixt Sanderson and Del Rio? Dat’s de place whar thar’s ben so many hold-ups. Wy; du yoah know?”—and Samson’s speech warmed with the consciousness of superior knowledge—“I’ve knowed ’em to cut dem wirh screens wid deah bowie-knives an’ swipe whatevah dey could git; clos’, jewelry, shoes, any ole thing, ef dey couldn’t git no money. I suh yoah, chile, yoah bettah

let me shet de winder an' put down de blin'."

"The air is heavy here, with all these lamps. Why not put out the lights in some of them? I don't mind a few mosquitoes and dust is preferable to the stifling atmosphere. Surely no harm can overtake us, while we are running at this speed! Are we likely to be delayed?"

"No—dey ain't no stops foah Del Rio, but dey's greasers and sich, gropin' roun' dis yar track, 'bout sun-down an' aftah. Ef any o' dat gang seen yoah a settin' at de winder, dey'd cut de screen, sho' nuff."

"Why—Samson! I have nothing with which to tempt a train-robber."

"Dey don' know dat, Honey! dey'd tote yoah off, anyhow, if dey could."

"What dreadful things you put into my head—Samson! you make me afraid to stay here alone. Now could you not help me to exchange coaches?"

"Swap sleepers!" exclaimed Samson—"Wy, suah, ef *yoah* seys so—but what foah? Yo's got 'em all to yoah-seff anyhow—coaches and train; no Nabob dat I helped haul ovah dis yar road evah *was*

bettah bunked. Deys many a one 'ud like to step into yoah little shoes! Ef yoah was Missus President of de United States, yoah wouldn't have no moah room to yo-seff."

Having delivered himself of this pent up wisdom, he proceeded to his tasks. They were light and he gave himself leisure; at least he lingered over the single berth longer than absolute necessity required.

"Samson!"

It was the prospective occupant of the berth who spoke, at length, after the preparations for the night were completed.

The negro turned and faced the speaker.

"After what you have told me, I am a bit nervous about occupying this sleeper alone to-night. Is there no women aboard, in the tourist section, who might be induced to come here? I will gladly pay the additional expense, if there be any incurred, for the sake of company."

"Didn't I 'done tole yoah, chile, yoah's de only guest on dis yar trip? Dey ain't nobody in de second class; but, bless yoah, Honey, don't be skeered. I's gwoine to set

right har. I don't 'spec to shet a eye, till dis yar train toddles into El Paso. Now yoah jes go and rest yoh-seff. Nothin' ain't gwoine to hurt yoah, es long es yoah's got Samson."

His size betokened strength; his movements were those of an athlete, in training for a fight. From a physical point of view, he could, doubtless, had he chosen and opportunity afforded, have slain, as did his herculean predecessor, of Biblical fame, all the refractory forces in Israel; yet, neither his size, strength, apparent training, nor reassuring words were sufficient to dispel the apprehensions he had inspired; and so,—with the lowering of the "Pizarro's" lights, the donning of her dream gown, Miss Breckenridge experienced an especial need of putting in a petition of unusual fervor to her patron saint, for immediate protection.

With the sweet, reposeful frame of mind which follows the soul's submission to the powers Divine, she slept. A current of cooler air than the desert day had afforded, swept, with the speeding train, through the open window above the

girl's berth, as Samson, obedient to her wish, had neither closed nor screened it.

The full moon flooded with tender radiance, a form and face, as fair as that of the celebrated Cenci in her white chamber on the slopes of the palaced Esquiline.

It must have been—"the witching hour of night when churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out contagion"—that the sleeping maiden was suddenly and most singularly startled. Out of the blurring shadow, a black face emerged, which, but for the firey eyes in their white globes swimming, would have been undistinguishable. Teeth of ghastly gleam were set in a frame of ebony.

Arms uplifted threateningly, as some foul-winged carrion, whose food is the putrid flesh.

"Ho! Help! Here! Conductor! Samson!"—was the suppliant scream, that pierced the slumberous night.

Black fingers closed the pallid lips and a muffled voice, close to the girl's bewildered ears, muttered—

"Look har—little white dove. I's not gwoine to hurt yoah."

"Why, it's you, Samson!" faltered the dove when she found her voice. "How you frightened me! Have they come? The robbers you told me about? Did they get in through the window while I was asleep? What do they want? money—I suppose, or valuables! Here! give them these; they're all I have about me."

And from her trembling fingers, the girl proceeded to spill into his sooty palms, her few rings, then flung him her small watch, a pearl necklace, wrist bands. chatelaine and leather purse.

"There! go, now! quickly!" was the quivering command. But the brute did *not* go; he surrendered the valuables; bent, still lower his ebon brows and into the dove's dazed ears, hissed words of unrepeatable pollution.

"Holy Mother—Mary—defend me!"—was the plaintive prayer, as the petitioner leaped into the open window; but the slime of savage hands was upon her; between her and sudden, sure destruction.

"I's *not* gwoine to let yoah kill yoah-seff. What foah yoah *want* to kill yoah-seff?"

I won't hurt yoah, chile!" came the sneaking apology.

Men, from the privileged, idle, moneyed, titled class; to the hireling, depraved and enslaved white or black, *profess* protection for the young, the innocent, the dependent, the weak; but more merciless than the bullet, the drawn dirk, the poisoned arrow, on the subtle drug, is their *form* of chivalry.

Death is at least dignified. It is the royal disposition of certain four-footed beasts, "to prey on nothing that doth *seem* as dead;"—yet man, who is said to be the flower of civilization, still employs his best brain and brawn in the most ignoble type of destruction.

The black has learned well the lesson of debasement from his white brother.

"You will not harm me!" gasped the girl, repeating at length, as in a nightmare, his well worn words; for the fright, heat and horror of the situation, had all but thrown her into a swoon.

"Turn on the light, then, and see if you can find me a glass of water. How very dark you have made it here!"

Faithful to his training, Samson sprang to her bidding, during which interval the young girl pressed the electric button at hand, with the hope of summoning the conductor, who *should*, by every code of transit, have been hers to command, in case of emergency; but no response to the ring came from out those sullen silences.

Locked in a limbo unapproachable, that official reposed, for he could not have escaped the train. To personally summon him, explain, implore his protection, was the only remaining alternative for this fettered dove. A leap from the berth, a stride toward the clattering platform gave prompt expression to this resolve; when lo! the sinister presence! it shadowed, barred the passage completely.

"I can't let yoah go out dar in de dust and dark; yoah might hurt yo-self; dem little feet was nevah made for de stones; stay har, Honey and go sleep. Yoah don need be skeered. Wy! for all de gold in dis world, Samson wouldn't hurt a hair o' yoah head."

By such empty phrase, did the wretch seek beguilement. With all the angels

and ministers of grace, reputed to be hovering ever above the innocent of this sin-infested sphere, was there no release?

He, who had warned of bandits and tricks of criminals, was *himself* the culprit. The maid had need of courage, a firm hand and whatever of strategy she could command, for what was *her* slender strength, to *his* Samsonian sinews?

What to *him* appeal for protection?

To a lecherous black blinded by passion, these delicate weapons of combat, are as tender rose leaves, in the teeth of a tearing tornado. Not, then, in shriek, or wail, or struggle, denunciation, threat, prayer, or promise of things to come, but in the wily walks of diplomacy, did *her* deliverance lie.

Knowing, from having passed her more youthful years in the South, the nature of the negro, a sudden thought, which may be defined as inspiration, illumined this dark scene.

“My banjo!” exclaimed the girl—
“Where did you put it? Bring it. You did not intend to frighten me, did you?
I called you, didn’t I, to get the banjo,

of course; and you came, as my old mammy — Hannah — used come, tiptoeing in, mornings, before I was awake, lest she disturb me, to bring hot water and brush my clothes. You have found the banjo? Sure! Thank you. Now, we shall have some music; a concert, all by ourselves. I am going to play for *you*, and sing. I shall sleep no more to-night. This night is *your* night, Samson!"

By such hysterical speech was the savage kept in abeyance.

They were nervous, tense fingers that swept the banjo strings and a trembling voice that trilled an old negro melody. "Nickodemus—the slave,—was of African birth;

And was bought for a bag full of gold.

He was woolly of pate and plethoric of girth,

But he died years ago, very old.

'Twas his last, sad request,

As they laid him away—

In the trunk of an old, hollow tree;

Wake me up was his charge,

At the first break of day,

Wake me up for the great jubilee."

At the sound of the swelling strain, Samson's face glowed with elation, so sensitive is the Senegambian to the mystery and magic of music.

From plaintive, plantation songs that appear vulgar to ears aesthetic, the singer varied her repertoire to nursery rhymes, lullabys, concert hall trills, minstrel echoes, patriotic odes, arias from the comic and grand opera, the Salvation Army's stirring chords, anthems of Mother Church.

Samson listened, as one in a dream, or under the spell of some powerful narcotic, for he had never before known so rare a revel.

The night was *indeed* his, by the gift of a voice, whose subtle sorcery sent the savage within him away, subdued and ashamed, into the shrouded night.

Never for one little moment, did the soloist relax her watch; on, through the long hours assigned for rest, the fierce vigil continued unbroken, with only Samson and the wondering night birds of the desert, for audience. More potent than speech was the witchery wrought. What wonder?

Was she not singing for what is vastly more precious, than the hoarded treasure of the Incas and Ind, without which life, liberty, wealth, fame, in all the lofty places of this world, are but haggard, hollow, unholy things?

Not until the ruby beams of a day new born, began to deck the tawny Southlands with daintiest draperies, did this gentle necromancer, yield her well-earned interlude; and then, she saw a Samson shorn of his base strength, a soul whitened by the presence of purity.

* * * * *

"Any hold-ups?" asked a brakeman at El Paso, when the all but empty caravan of the desert, arrived on time.

"Nary"—answered the engineer—"but"—he added—"they'd have had poor pickings, with only a woman and parrot aboard."

Only these! How pitifully small did they count! she, of whom the men spoke, gave no hint of *her* perilous encounter, but, womanlike, bore the crushing dread of it, with dumb agony and then, as many another has done, passed on.

A SLEUTH OF STOWAWAYS

A SLEUTH OF STOWAWAYS.

Down by San Francisco's sea-wall, among the masts, figure-heads, piers, piles, sails, nets, stringers, coal and coils of cordage, there lives a noticeable and weather-wrinkled man, who has, through many consecutive seasons, propelled a battered boat.

Captain John Willis, is the name and title of this unique personality, who more frequently answers to "Jack," "Sea-dog," "Wharf-rat" and the "Boatman." Comradeship, by him, is claimed with Commodore Vanderbilt, which extends back to the early mid-century, when the founder of that famous house, plied his craft to Staten Island and recked not of the rank reserved for his descendents.

Among the duties performed by this erstwhile associate of a Croesus, are numbered the custody of stowaways.

"I've ben' in this business quite a spell, nigh onto forty year"—he said, when I sought him in his accustomed haunts—"and I can ginerelly spot a stow."

When asked to give the benefit of his experience, he did so with characteristic clearness.

"Different ones"—he explained—"has different methods. Some hang round the docks days 'afore a ship sails: there's allus' somethin' hungry and homesick and tired and lonesome lookin' about um'. If asked any questions, they say they're jest agoin' to ship, either to the Islands, or Alaska, or Panama or Mexico. Others, agin', speak fur a job, callin' theirselves deck-hands, or waiters, or extras; some is not seen 'till the last rope is histed; then they come hustlin' on, as if they had'nt had no time to git a ticket. Why! I've even pulled 'um out to meet the boat, arter she's clean off into the stream; if the skipper happens to be good natured, he'll slack up and git 'um aboard. Arter all that bother, I've brung 'um back."

"Who are these people?" I inquired—"and *why* is this method of transportation adopted?"

"Who are they?" the Sleuth of Stowaways repeated—

"Some is gentlemen, least-wise in looks and talk; some is toughs; some is bums; I've handled all kinds—women, girls, boys, babies—without a copper; all a wantin' to git away."

"Why choose this means?"

"Ax me a easier one. Why does a sailor, when he's overboard, grip a shingle, or any floatin' thing he ken set his fingers on? when folks hav'nt got no money, nor work, nor nothin' to eat, choice 'aint in it. Stows is always broke."

"Do they expect to improve their condition?"

"It's mostly change, they're arter—and the hope of gettin' a morsel o' money. Why! when the Klondike boom was on, I brung in boat-loads of 'um, slim girls and boys too, headed for the gold fields, with nothin' mor'n the thin clothes they stood in."

"What in the world could *they* do in the gold fields?"

"Probably as much as they air a doin'

here and there's always the hope uv that morsel o' money."

"How do they manage to get aboard?"

"O! that's easy enough! nobody knows who's who, the day a boat's gettin' out o' port. If she's crowded, so much the better fur the stow; he can hide in the hold without bein' spied. Sometimes they has friends mong'st the sailors, or waiters, or passengers that helps 'um to hide; then they air in luck. Fact is, any excuse does at the dock, but it's mighty hard fur 'um to git past the Heads."

"Yes"—I repeated—"It *is* hard to pass the Heads"—for Jack's quaint remarks recalled impressively an incident of a voyage, unforgettable.

I had need to rise early, as the "Queen of the Pacific" must be reached by 8 o'clock.

I found the wharf thronged with the usual implements of traffic, which included boxes, bales, furniture, lumber, swine, sheep, goats, cows, mules—while above all, hummed human voices, unremittingly.

The decks swarmed with passengers,—booked, ticketed, cabined—many of them

attended by their friends, who lingered solicitously until the sound of the last gong and final warning—"All visitors ashore"—precipitated a general scamper.

The gangway was then withdrawn. The last rope loosed. The screw turned. Showers of 'kerchiefs, kisses, flowers and good words were wafted from the piers. Music, flying flags, salutes and stirring whistles softened the pangs of parting and—we were at last—off.

It was, indeed, a glorious morning. The bay, a molten blaze of many blended hues, bore upon its serene surface, the flags of all nations, above which brooded the white doves of peace. Crafts of every conceivable description swung in the flame-lit fathoms, that laved the feet of the stately hills, then stepping out, one by one, from their gossamer night robes, to receive the first kiss of dawn.

Grim Alcatraz, girdled with bristling armaments, scintillating in the sun, suggested the presence of some monster leviathan, emerging from the deep, still undivested of gems, from his submarine home.

The City's superb eminences, with her

countless spires, domes and minarets against the crimson sky, seemed a temple suited to the abode of Celestials.

"What a magnificent morning! What splendid pictures! This beats Boston! Naples is nowhere! Sydney is out of sight! Telegraph Hill looks a coroneted castle! Angel Island is appropriately named! I wouldn't mind being a soldier, if I could live at the Presidio! Russian Hill tops Bunker!" were among the ecstatic exclamations. We were within the purple pillared "gate," and so lightly did our big steamer skim the torpid tides that not a ripple whitened the blue.

A languid little breeze strode in from the sea, scarcely stiffening the stars and stripes, that soared protectingly at our peak. In the offing, a sail, no larger than a heron's wing flitted, then melted away into the mystic world of waters, a reminder that we too would soon be, but a speck in the distance, a break in the horizon's hem, and then—blankness.

These and similar meditations were interrupted by a sudden stop. "What has happened? Why? What? Where?"

Who?"—flew from lip to lip, but no answer came from the ozoned depths, nor yet from the startled crew.

Those, however, who preserved a becoming composure and were bent to observation, might have followed the swift unfurlment by a deck hand, of a small flag; noted a signal from the pilot's bridge; a naked eye could have discerned the approach of a boat in the hands of a practiced sculler, who was soon alongside the Alaskan liner.

Meanwhile, a rope ladder had been lowered, whither an officer and his aids escorted a shrinking youth, who was gruffly bidden to descend. Listlessly he grasped the swaying stair; when his feet struck the lower rung, Captain Willis' reaching arms received him and limp, faint, mute, dazed, he sank a baffled stowaway into certain custody.

"Any baggage?" inquired the Captain—his gaze directed deckward.

"No."

"Any more of 'um up there?"

"Wait,"—was the laconic order given.

These unexpected developments supplied

a sensation, more or less diverting, to minds receptive.

Early occupants of the cabins, steeped in slumber, or wrapped in reveries befitting the sublimity of an approaching deep sea voyage, accepted the jarring interruption and forsook their cushioned ease, to court a comfortless curiosity.

Those of more privileged sequestration, who lingered aft, to drink the glories of the morning, rudely snapped the witcheries wrought by slopes of green that go down to greet the blue; the loops of sun and spray that make radiant rainbows among the granite boulders; the reaching estuaries, the foam-flowered shore, the symphonous surf, the soft, velvet-shouldered hills, the salute of the seals, the splendid stretch of sea—all were abandoned for the sake of a girl-faced, simple, shamed youth, whom confusion covered, as an ill-fitting mantle.

The attention he had won, was certainly concentrated, all else for the time being unheeded.

The stowaway could have claimed comparison with a star actor, who shadows his support and extorts the interest of his

audience. While the stow differed from the star, in that embarrassment was visibly apparent, he had nevertheless, unwittingly, accomplished what myriads seek for, fruitlessly, through years of patient toil; and his audience was not merely interested; it was indulgent; it was sympathetic; he had awakened what was best in it, therefore the unenviable role was of value to the world.

One, in that upper assembly, moved by the blessed quality, which makes us all akin, flung, as by irresistible impulse, a nickel, from his perch on the hurricane deck, down on the floor of Jack's wabbly craft.

"That's for him,"—shouted the sender, making a conch of one hand, addressing the red-shirted Captain, pointing, at the same time, toward his sullen captive; this proved the cue for more nickels, dimes and larger silver pieces.

One especially favored cabin passenger, who lolled fetchingly in a fur-draped steamer chair, not so young as she used to be, but still impressionable, rose superior to her flirtations by dropping a dollar into the novel collection box; she had

a son, somewhere, she said, with the same sort of kinkey, coppery hair and—freckles.

O! Mother Nature! thou art indeed omnipotent!

The captive, down there, in his open prison, became, by these ameliorating advances, as one transfigured; for he rose impulsively, from the cross plank that supported him, removed his hat and lifted his eyes; tears suffused them, and such scrappy speech as reached us may be thus transcribed.

"I—thank—you—friends—dear—dear—friends—one—and—all. I—shall—never—never—forget—you."

And so, with blessings, wrenched from the depths of one despairing soul, did our voyage begin.

"It's a good omen"—remarked a furrow-featured man, learned in the lore of winds and tides—"luck always follows alms, bestowed the day a ship sails." His words proved prophetic, as a more charming tour among mist islands, set in luminous seas, never weathered the wave.

"What did you do with the boy?" I asked Captain Willis, jogging his memory,

after my return from the great, white, silent, nightless North.

"I dumped him off at Meiggs's," was his answer.

"It's convenient fur me and a heap suitabler fur the stows; they like a place whar they can hide and not have to be looked at by other folks; there's lots o' lumber at Meiggs, which is useful to 'um, 'cause it keeps 'um out 'o sight, while they're a restin' and calculatin' on what they're a goin' to do."

"After Meiggs—what then?"

"I cayn't undertake to keep track of all the stows; t'would interfere with my other business, ye know; but seys that un to me, seys he."

"Jack—I was broke. I'd ben' a tryin' to git a job and arter knockin' 'round and 'round, and gettin' kicks and cuffs and havin' doors slammed in yer face fur days and bein' told to move on—Wy! say! a kid gits mighty sore and thirsty and hungry; and I seys to myself seys I, nothin' *can* happen, out in the ocean, worse than is bound to happen har' and I'm goin' to take the chances and I did."

"What became of him?" I insisted.

"Wal! when I sot him on the dock, he had somethin' like three dollars gin' him from the decks; I chipped in, so's to make it a even five, then I tuk' him to a eatin' house, whar he had a good breakfast. Then I seys to him, seys I, ride out on the San Mateo road, 'es fur es the cars 'll take ye; then walk to a milk ranch and ask the foreman to give 'ye a job; and he done so."

"Well—what then?"

"In about a fort-night er so"—continued this oracle—"he come to see me an' I seys to him, seys I—"How goes it?" He seys—

"I got the job all right and might 'hev stuck it out fur awhile, if I had'nt ben so turribly hendered. I had to git up at 2 o'clock in the mornin' to do my milkin; but that I didn't mind so much as the lonesomeness, when everybody else wus sound asleep and the awful dark; t'wus the Swiss milkers, tho', that done me the dirt, fur they, seein' I wus a new hand and American, had me fired and then—they run me off."

"And then"—

"I didn't see him no more, 'till I hooked him out of the bay."

"Dead?"

"Yas 'um! and what's more—part of him gone; by the looks, I reckoned he'd ben' in the water—mebby two days; the crabs had ben at him, but they left him his reddish hair and freckles; that's how I knowed t'was him. I s'pose he got tired huntin' fur a job and gettin' turned down; then he done what lots more uv 'um do—jumped overboard! The coroner paid ten dollars fur what was left of his body and it wus took to Potter's, I 'spose, 'cause nobody claimed him. Ye see, missus, the boy dead, wus worth good dust to the city; alive, he wusn't worth a red."

What ghastly revelation was this! The dead of more value than the living! By such grewsome reckoning how poor indeed, is life!

"Do you bring in many?" I asked.

"Stows is my line, lady, above water, ruther than under it, tho' I *do* handle um both ways. About every day I bring in somebody that wants to git away; and *why*

do they want to git away? What's the matter with San Francisco?"

"Yes! What is the matter with San Francicso"—I repeated—"that the dead is worth more to it than the living?"

"Wal! ye ken bile it down to this, missus; money's got the sinch here, 'es every whar else. San Francisco is no place fur them 'es has stomachs an' nothin' to put into 'um. Poor folks had better git away and stay away."

"But, Captain! *where* are they to go? Where *would* they be welcome? Is there a harbor in the world, where people may land without money?"

The Captain's face lengthened perceptibly, as he said—

"None that ever *I* shipped to. None that ever *I* hearn' tell of, 'cept from the parsons and they don't locate the port. Sartin it is, that the stows show to ship is slim. I'm here to head 'um off and in all ports whar these ships go, there's law agin' pauper landin'. In Honolulu, every new one has to hav' fifty dollars, or else be took back—whar he come from. In Seattle and Tacoma tramps has to go to jail; many a one is brung

back that hasn't the stuff to shore on; many a one I've saved the bother of havin' to *be* brung back."

"Does it pay?"

"Who?"

"You—Captain!"

"Wal! I've got no kick agin' *my* job. What a man's ben doin' fur so many year gits to be sort o'second natir', but I want to tell you, right now, there's no money in stows above water; if they wus dead, I might stand a show of gettin' rich, cartin' 'um to the morgue at ten dollars a head."

"And becoming one of the four hundred and being bidden to a ball of Mrs. Vanderbilt?"—was my bold hazard of possibilities.

"Yas—Cornelius *did* use to say in the old days when we bunked together—"money is what countenances money." As it is, wal! I ain't countin' on any thing, more'n what the boat brings me in regular"—

The sage boatman was here interrupted by a mysterious signal, unintelligible to me, for he suddenly seized his oars, swung his skiff, doffed his lopsided sou'wester and with a deferential—

“’Scus *me* please, I must be off!” —
troughed the tides, at the wharf’s outer
edge and was soon lost in the lowering
fog.

By which abrupt taking off, the fogs of
bewilderment beclouded me; but from them,
swifter than the boatman’s swinging
scull, flew sympathy for the brother stow,
apprehended, out there among the mouvey
mists, awaiting, perchance in trembling
terror the Sleuth’s discovery.

Dire depression grew with the thought,
that a being possessed of all the wealth of
pulsing life, is, if moneyless and jobless,
counted *less* in a city’s strange economics,
than a dismembered corpse, flung up from
the noisome depths of the bay, doomed to
the Coroner’s cart, the slimy slab, the cold
scrutiny of the callous and final consign-
ment to an unidentified pit in Potter’s.



THE STORY OF A CURSE

THE STORY OF A CURSE.

"I insist that the house now occupied by me be torn down, no one having occupied it but my own family."

"Ever since the will of Mrs. Amelia Van Reynegom Pixley, of which the foregoing is a faithful excerpt, was made public, there have, behind fans and above thin-lipped, daintily decorated tea cups, been ominous head-shakes, whispers, brow-lifts, vague conjectures, hints, significant sniffs, suggestions, sly elbowings and even smothered scraps of scandal, touching what the garrulous call "wanton desecration," and the more conservative concede to be strange. An atmosphere of mystery, which is another name for morbid fascination, hung about the picturesque premises, which were numbered, long before their destruction, among the haunted houses of San Francisco.

"Why should a fine, strong house of

twenty-nine rooms go to the dust heap, when *we* haven't shelter for our bones?" quaver the aged, the indigent, the out-ridden and down-trodden in life's race.

Why, indeed! Let the masters of rigorous fate answer.

"It is outright arson, therefore unlawful, this destruction of property;" croak certain legal luminaries, who quote, the while, volubly from the code.

"What a fine summer resort it would make!" exclaim the fraternal dispensers of a brew that brings ephemeral nepenthe,—“with all this shrubbery and shade; a few van loads of tables, chairs, steins, goblets, a brass band on holidays and Pixley's would be a blooming oasis for the thirsty multitudes.”

But—the property is placed on sale, in lots for building purposes exclusively and so the distributors of soft goods are barred.

The church of which Mrs. Pixley was a life-long and devout member, nurses a grievance which is likely to remain unredressed, for it is alleged that the lady intended the ultimate appropriation of her home for a boarding school, under the

tutelage of trustees appointed by a Bishop; but, it is quite clear, that this dream of religious and educational endowment came *not* to tangible consummation.

Thrifty bonifaces of the publican trend of policy, cast long and covetous eyes upon those hospitably structured precincts, so rich in reminiscences, so adaptable to present conditions; and yet, despite these and all advances, Pixley's remained untenanted after the removal of the original owners; and these, as if loth to leave the scenes of their sublunary activities, still lingered, if reports were to be credited, about the grounds.

According to reputed testimony, the wraith of Mrs. Pixley frequently appeared in the wooded shades she loved so well. Attaches of her household, trusted servants, who remained in the rambling old mansion after the hammer of leather-lunged auctioneers had fallen upon the bronzes, lanterns, vases, jardinières, Persian rugs, Gobelin tapestries, Bagdad portieres, pictures, swords, statuary, armor, ebonies, candelabra, screens, camphor-woods, silver sets and all that combined to make a rare collection of

household gods, tell of tappings and rappings, steps stealthy, sudden and untraceable; whispers, varied by voices heavy and hoarse; laughter that was mirthless and sobs that could not be stilled, in the abandoned ball and banquet hall, where Mr. Pixley in his years of mental luster and monetary opulence, held generous and most memorable wassail.

To the skeptical, this may seem but the sheerest vagary of some hair-brained scamp, who seeks the coinage of filthiest lucre, hatched from a shredded theme; but the more reflective may, from the mention of these ghostly visitations, glean meat for fruitful meditation. With Prince Hamlet, are we not all moved to the humble acknowledgment, that "there are more things in earth and heaven than are dreamed of in our philosophy?" Should one who has passed to a more removed place, known to us in days of yore as Frank M. Pixley, now protest at the effacement of his personality, in the home he best loved and builded so exceptionally, what doubting Thomas of the flesh would, if he could, withhold from that restless

entity, the poor privilege of making such sentient expression as is now at his command?

Above all else did Mr. Pixley seek egress from oblivion. To the end that the black night of nihility might be, for a little time postponed, he built chapels, endowed kindergartens, named public thoroughfares, planted trees, set himself in imperishable print and engraved his name upon the hem of histrionic art.

An actress contributed her mite to his immortality. A town in the County of Tulare was christened in his honor. A male child, not of his blood, bears his name, and is the principal heir to his estate. That the bald, bare, waterless dunes, where he first broke soil on the Pacific peninsula and made to blossom as the fairest rose, now nearly a half century ago, may not contribute to the perpetuity of his name, was by no means, originally willed by the Argonaut's founder.

Set like a precious jewel in a wilderness of walls, that garden, with its rare greenery and riotous bloom, brought in tender seedlings, from the

tropics, the white nurseries of the Alps and the far, frozen shores of stiffened seas, was, to Mr. Pixley a refuge, an oasis, an eden, the beguiling child of his harried age.

"Preserve it," were his instructions to Mrs. Pixley, who survived him; "make it a public park, children's playground, a sailors' rest, camp-meeting grove, a free wash yard for the poor; anything you will, which may best serve the greater number; but, in the name of God and the vow you made me at the altar, destroy the house; let nothing of it remain. Promise! Your hand on the Book, solemnly."

And the wife, without question, promised.

How well that promise has been kept, all San Francisco knows. The spectacle of a large force of men engaged in the destruction of property, is so unusual as to make it memorable. Days merged into weeks before the highly polished, curly veined, fragrant woods, from California's giant sequoia forests, which formed the floors and ceilings in that unique dwelling,

were reduced to fragments, and carted away.

The crenelated mouldings, fantastic friezes, wainscotings, scrolls, mosaics, pedestals, pillars, mantels, baths, blinds, tiles, lattices, lintels, that, in charred sections, went to swell unsightly rubbish heaps in the City of the Doleful Dumps, bore mute and most pathetic testimony, to the strength of Mrs. Pixley's pledge.

Lest the singularity of the clause in her last testament, which directed the destruction of the dwelling after her death, should subject it to contest and possible revision, the lady made gift deeds of property fronting Green and Steiner Streets, in such manner as to make the house detrimental to the remaining space, this being in accordance with Mr. Pixley's explicit stipulation, that, should the grounds in their sylvan state, hinder the entire effacement of the house, they too, must be divided into lots and sold. Having a brick foundation the dwelling could not be removed and standing, as it did, in the way of commercial advantage, it could not be let remain and so its doom was inevitable.

"But why this defacement of beauty?—This spoil of precious utility?" is the oft put query. Was it the mere conjuring of a brain distraught, that raved about "a house with a thousand eyes," declaring that "it was haunted, hounded and must be torn down?"

"If Mr. Pixley had been a poor man he would have passed the last days of his life in a madhouse;" is the statement of his surviving physicians and attendants. Who, save the most psychic of scientists, may presume to decide where sanity ends and insanity begins? That Mrs. Pixley, a woman of exceptionally sound judgment, respected her husband's wishes is proof positive of a design, at bottom, more tangible than sentiment, more enduring than the whims of a mind diseased.

Who ever accused Frank Pixley of being a sentimental man? Since the early fifties, when, as a youthful adventurer, he led his gray mule over untrodden fastnesses, in search of a place to camp and secure unto himself freedom of speech, a human habitation and a name, Mr. Pixley's plans were original, fearless, irrepressible and the

final disposition of his effects is in keeping with the eccentricities of his character.

Dreams he had, though then but in embryo, of one day becoming a power in the new land of his adoption, by the exercise of his pen. To the end that facility of expression might be acquired, it was his habit, each day to record, not merely the actual events of that day, but the thoughts, aspirations, desires and projects conceived between the hours of waking and sleeping. Did he perform manual labor? Each stroke was noted. Did he enter into a business transaction? Each detail was audited in such exactitude as never inked a public ledger. Did he form an acquaintance? The name and scope of it went into the personal records. Did he take a journey? Every moment and mile was incorporated in the journal.

As his life widened in activity and acquisition, these journals became a subject of care, somewhat more serious than their author had in the beginning, anticipated. What a drawered desk sufficed for, at a circumscribed stage in his career gradually grew to proportions, call-

ing for much greater space, a certain system and more security of keeping—as they were not in their original text, intended for indiscriminate perusal.

With the evolution of his residence, from two rooms to twenty nine, safes, vaults, closets, cabinets and shelving were constructed, so located and screened by sliding panels, interior decorations, etc., as to evade detection; thus the house came to be literally honey-combed with receptacles for private papers. Instead of curtailing those records with the varied activity of business, their author elaborated, the habit having fastened itself, his plan being, eventually, to revise, segregate and publish them in book form, after his retirement from the journalistic arena—a task which would, doubtless, have been accomplished, had he remained to the end, in the full possession of his faculties. Long before he was mentally stricken, however, his pen hand became palsied and he could not successfully dictate.

Not only were those “confessions” niched in welded walls, rich in personal reminiscences, but they may be said to have con-

tained much of the private, unpublished history of San Francisco, as the names of his associates figured in them.

Surviving ones among that sturdy, and alas! fast diminishing company, make the bold assertion that those "confessions" if published would have incriminated, not only their clever custodian, but others upon whom the penalty of celebrity hangs.

Whether or not this be true, it is safe to presume that they could have furnished themes for absorbing tragedy, comedy, ballads, sonnets, lyrics and even blank verse, as the scenes which they must have portrayed were among the most picturesque and dramatic, in annals renowned for the scenic and startling in human affairs.

In those moving incidents Mr. Pixley was ever a conspicuous personality, as his political prominence, fearless expression, pronounced patriotism; his personal magnetism, the brilliancy of his wit, railery and satire, his social status, wealth and wide acquaintance secured for him bitter enemies, as well as admirers and friends.

His house at one time, was the Mecca of the literati touring the Pacific Coast.

That it was, likewise, sought by persons of sinister purpose, one example among many of vivid memory may serve to illustrate. Under cover of cloud and the night, now many years ago, a spare, bent woman of wintry face and thin hair that made ashen strands in the chill trade-winds which drifted in from the sea, cast her gaunt shadow athwart the Pixley threshold and thus did she deliver herself:

"Son of Isaac, the apostate Jew, long have I awaited you and now take this. By ill-gotten gains are you here possessed, but they will pass to the property of strangers. No child, in wedlock, will be born to you, but, should seed of yours bring issue, the mark of Cain will be upon it, its death untimely! In the days from which you cannot escape, the friends of your affluence will know you no more. Demented you will die and your bones shall bear no sepulchre! Accursed be the ground beneath your feet! May the God of Israel, whom you have foresworn, deal with you as you have dealt with me and mine! By our ancient and unalterable faith, I demand of

you, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, heart for heart!"

* * * * *

Over in the foothills of Contra Costa County there dwells a lonely woman, long ago by the world forgotten, who avows with convincing vehemence, that this was not the only curse which followed the pale form of Pixley, out where the crimson shroud encircled it, in the white corridorred columbarium.

More vital than vengeance are the issues immured within the breast of this modern Rachael, sitting in sorrow and desolation, mourning for her children and refusing to be comforted because they are not. Those children, the younger Pixley heirs and hers, by the holy rites of love, are removed from her, not by the hand of God but by the more cruel mandate of man. Who is this Rachael, robbed of her children? Who the fierce woman that hurled upon the Pixley portals, such dire and accurate prophecy? Who the apostate Jew?

A party of Bohemian bards and space-writers sought permission to spend a night

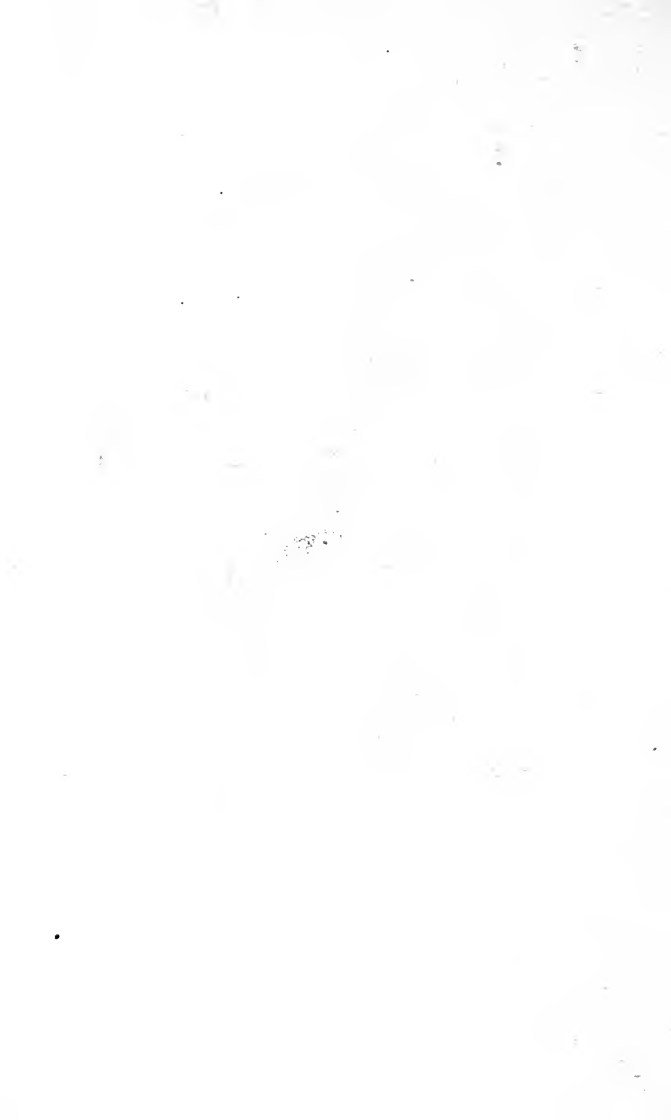
on the Pixley premises, after they were reputed to have been haunted, but these in-offensive folk were rigidly barred.

Wherefore?

After the house lapsed into vacancy, why were artists, writers and every class of journalists refused entrance thereto? The written reams, secreted in shelving behind the sliding panels, could have explained, but, with the hand that penned and preserved them, they have passed into ashes.



Eugenia Pellogg—



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